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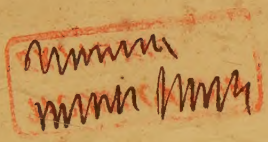

THE

SHORTEST WAY

TO END

DISPUTES

ABOUT

RELIGION.

IN TWO PARTS.

BY

THE REV. ROBERT MANNING,

AUTHOR OF "ENGLAND'S CONVERSION AND REFORMATION COMPARED," &C. &C.

"Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."....MATT. xvi. 18.

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PREFACE.

It has happened to me as it does usually to persons unwarily engaged in building. They propose, at first, to confine themselves to some model which they think will answer their end, but are insensibly drawn on beyond their first design, and the desire of adding still something more grows as fast upon them as the work itself advances. This, I say, has been my case. For, when I first took up my pen to write something concerning the Church's infallibility, I intended no more than a few private discourses upon that subject; and so began abruptly with the principal proofs of the point in question, and proceeded immediately to answer the celebrated distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals.

And here I designed to have stopped; but, reflecting with myself that, besides the belief of an infallible Church, it would be requisite to determine in which of all the churches (for they are grown very numerous since the pretended reformation) the infallibility promised by Christ is lodged,

Acc. 964

I judged it necessary to add a short discourse to prove that the Roman Catholic Church alone has a just title to it, — which was no sooner done, but I found myself obliged to vindicate that Church from the imputation of the many gross errors laid to her charge; for it would be a vain attempt to prove her infallible, as long as this popular prejudice subsisted against her. And now I began to find that I had reckoned very short at first, and that the more the work advanced, the faster it grew upon my hands. But, being too far engaged to stop, I was under a necessity of making still more additions, and those of a considerable length, in vindication of the Church of Rome, and to invalidate the testimony of her first and principal accuser; that so her enemies might be more easily disposed to a belief of her infallibility, when they were convinced that she had already continued free from errors for the space of above sixteen hundred years, and that the chief evidence against her was a person of too scandalous a character to be depended upon in any thing of moment, much less in a cause wherein the credit and reputation of such an illustrious body as the Roman Catholic Church has always been, and the salvation of millions of souls, are concerned.

If any one asks me why I have singled out Martin Luther rather than any other of the pre-

tended reformers, I answer that my reason was, not because I thought Luther a worse man than any of the rest, but because he was the ringleader of the schism; and a ringleader ought always to be made an example. For if either Calvin, or Beza, or Zuinglius, or any other had begun, he should have been my man; and, to do them all justice, there is not one amongst them but would have furnished me with sufficient matters of scandal against them.

But to return to what I was saying: When I had thus done my best to disarm the capital enemy of the Church of Rome, and proved her title to infallibility to stand good notwithstanding the many impeachments against her, and had also fully answered the distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals, I doubted not but it was then time to lay down my pen; which my temper, naturally inclined to peace, would certainly have prompted me to do, had it not been for the fame of a book entitled The Case Stated, &c., which appears now in its fourth edition, and is extolled by many Protestants (I presume not the most learned) as an unanswerable piece.

This tempted me, beyond my strength, to add a second part; for which I found matter enough cut out, in the great variety of objections, scattered

up and down by the author of it, against the truth which I have undertaken to maintain. And thus it was that I found my papers swelled by degrees into a small volume, and I began to think of letting them appear abroad.

But, whilst I was yet wavering and unresolved, Queen Anne died, and a new scene opened. Both town and country swarmed with pamphlets, and all heads were so filled with politics, that I judged there was no room left for thoughts of a more serious nature. This, and the disturbances that have happened since, have partly, I cannot say wholly, been the occasion that they were not printed sooner. For, to deal plainly, a fear I had upon me to offend the government, by publishing a book in favor of the Roman Catholic Church, has, from the very time it has been written, principally retarded its appearance in public. But the ground of my fear was my imagining that Protestants would look upon such an undertaking as dangerous to the church established by law, and a means to promote Popery; and I should have continued in this error, had not the Vindicator, or author of The Case truly Stated, whom I casually met with, disabused me. For, towards the end of his long conversation with the Restater, who complained that Roman Catholics had not the liberty of the press, he tells him, (p. 124,) "he

wished heartily that they were let loose to write as they pleased;" and he gives him this reason for it, "because they would do their own business most effectually," viz., by writing in defence of Popery.

This coming from a person who, I presume, makes a considerable figure in his church, encouraged me so effectually, that I resolved at last to let it try its fortune in the world. For I have no reason to doubt but that, in the judgment of Protestants, I have done a most acceptable piece of service to the Protestant cause, by writing for Popery; since the Vindicator assures us (and I suppose he speaks the sense of all his brethren, and is too generous to draw me into a snare) that this is the most effectual way to confute it. I hope, indeed, all Roman Catholics will be so favorable to me as to judge I have not prejudiced their cause. And if Protestants, at the same time, read me with the Vindicator's eyes, and are convinced that I have done a real service to the *reformed* churches, I presume my endeavors will be received kindly amongst them; and I shall have the satisfaction, which few authors have, please all sides, viz., Roman Catholics, by having endeavored to defend their Church the best I could, and Protestants, by having most effectually overthrown it. However, if I should be so

unhappy as to offend any, I hope, at least, I shall be allowed the "benefit of the clergy," which is a favor granted to most criminals for the first fact. For I assure my reader it is the first time I have ventured abroad; and, if I find the air does not agree with me, it will probably be the last.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE shortest way to end disputes about religion is, to reduce them all to this one question, viz., *Whether the Church which Christ has established on earth be infallible in deciding matters of faith;* for, if it be once fully and clearly proved that Christ has established such a Church, then all are bound to submit to her; and the decision of this one general point cuts off all particular disputes, which, like skirmishes between small parties, serve only to prolong a war, when it may be ended by one decisive battle.

The reason hereof is clear; because, in disputes about particular points, the arguments *pro* and *con* are either drawn from principles of natural reason, or from Scripture, or Church authority. If from principles of natural reason, the dispute is wholly philosophical, and will never be brought to any positive determination, because each party will always think his own reasons to be the best; if from Scripture, interpreted by private judgment, the disputants (both being parties) will never come to an agreement about the true sense of it. Lastly, if the arguments are grounded upon authority, that also will not be fully convincing, unless it be proved that it

is an authority which neither can err, nor lead into error; and then the question will be reduced to the principle I speak of, which, being once acknowledged, is a foundation, that can never fail, of all truths in which religion is concerned.

Let us instance in the doctrine of the real presence. This, and most other controverted points, may be examined either from principles of philosophy and human reason, or theologically, that is, from the Word of God, as interpreted by the Church. If a member of the Church of Rome will condescend so far as to treat the question philosophically, (which, indeed, is but mere boys' play in matters of religion,) he is then bound to maintain that the doctrine of the real presence, though it be above the comprehension of human reason, like other mysteries of faith, is not, however, contrary to reason; and this he may easily do, by reconciling it with the current principles of philosophy, as is the usual method in schools: but those who deny the real presence will, on the contrary, maintain that it is not only a contradiction to reason, but to the unquestionable information of our senses. This will be the dispute betwixt them; and what will be the issue of it? If the two parties are equally expert at fencing with words and distinctions, neither the one, nor the other, will ever be foiled by his adversary: both will come off triumphant, and highly satisfied with their own reasons; and thus the contest may last to the world's end, both champions maintaining their ground, as Thomists and Scotists do in their trivial logical questions, without ever putting their adversaries to a *nonplus*, or obliging them to retract their opinions.

But suppose the Roman Catholic should get some advantage over his Protestant antagonist, and, by the dint of ratiocination, incline him to think that the doctrine of the real presence is no contradiction either to sense or reason; what will this avail him? The Protestant will still regard it as a mere problematical opinion, which may be either true or false. Nay, let us even suppose him to be absolutely convinced of the truth of the Catholic doctrine in this particular point, he will be but one step nearer to the Church of Rome, and the same work is to begin over and over again, in every article in which Protestants differ from that Church; because, unless we come to one general and supreme principle, in which they are all equally included, every disputed article must shift as well as it can for itself, and stands upon its own bottom. And will it not be a very tedious and difficult task to make it appear evidently that every contested truth, though transcending all human reason, is not only reconcilable to it, but has the advantage of reason on its side?

Let any man but try the experiment of it in the great mystery of the blessed Trinity, against those who deny it. For though the truth of this mystery be unquestionable, if examined from principles of theology, yet, if a man will pretend to defend it with the weak arms of human reason, and answer all objections from reason against it, he will not only find it a very hard piece of work, but, let him even surpass his adversary in wit and eloquence, the objections will always appear more plausible, and to carry a greater weight of reason, than his answers; because whatever is *above* reason is seemingly *against* it.

Protestants themselves are sensible of this truth, when they write against Socinians, or even their dissenting brethren; for then they usually appeal from reason to authority; then they stick not to borrow arms of the *Papists*, to fight with against enemies who have seemingly reason on their side, and are, therefore, perpetually reproaching them for turning those arguments against them, which are the very foundation of *Popery*, and which they themselves are forced to answer, when they dispute against the Church of Rome.

Hence it plainly appears that disputes will be endless, and without number, if every particular article of religion is to be examined like a question in philosophy; but, if any one of them be examined theologically, and brought to the test of God's Word, delivered and explained to us by his holy Church, then the only remaining dispute, in order to a full conviction, will be, whether that Church be infallible in deciding matters of faith; and if this can be made out solidly and clearly, then private reason is silenced, and must either submit, or cease to be reason: nay, it will be obliged to captivate itself unto the obedience of faith, not only in reference to that one single point, but to all the decisions of that Church upon the same principle; because nothing is more reasonable than to submit to an infallible guide in every thing without exception.

For this reason I have always been of opinion that it is the only thing that ought to be disputed, and deserves the most serious examination of all parties; and I cannot question, but that every sincere lover of truth

and peace will readily fall in with my judgment; for, if it be found, upon inquiry, that there is such a thing as an infallible Church, a sincere lover of truth will think it the greatest happiness upon earth to be under the direction of a guide by whom he cannot be misled; and a lover of peace will be heartily glad to see innumerable disputes, which serve rather to perplex the truth than clear it, cut off by the determination of this one single point. He will also be convinced, that the shortest way to terminate disputes about religion is certainly the best; because disputes, even when necessary, are but a necessary evil, and, therefore, ought to be retrenched as much as is possible; and whoever declines this way seems to be afraid to see truth in its clearest light, and betrays a consciousness of the badness of his cause, in seeking to puzzle and perplex it in a labyrinth of endless and unnecessary disputes; whereas he who trusts to the goodness of his cause desires no better than to have it tried in the clearest and shortest way.

This is the true and only reason that has determined me in the choice of my subject, being resolved to go to the bottom of the cause at once, and hazard all upon the issue of it. The infallibility of the Church is the great cause in defence whereof I have ventured to draw my pen. For if I cannot convince a man of the truth of this fundamental article, I fear it will be time and labor lost to argue for particular tenets, which are all built upon the same foundation; but if I convince my reader that there is an infallible Church, established by Christ, and that this can be no other than the Roman Catholic Church, then it must be al-

lowed, that it will be unnecessary to labor in the proof of particular articles of faith professed by that Church, because the very strongest arguments that can be brought to prove them can never be of equal weight with that of the judgment and authority of an infallible Church declaring them to be divine and revealed truths; and this one syllogism must then suffice to demonstrate them all, viz., *An infallible Church cannot err; but the Church established by Christ is infallible, and this is no other than the Roman Catholic Church; therefore she cannot err.* The first proposition is self-evident; if, therefore, the second (which contains the whole subject of this treatise) be also proved to be true, the consequence is undeniable; and every thing that follows from it must be so too, and needs no further proof.

Having thus given the reason that induced me to undertake this subject, I shall add something to show the importance of it, by setting down a few consequences of moment which follow, if the truth of the question be on the Roman Catholic side, as I hope, with God's assistance, to prove it is.

First, then, if the Church which Christ has established be infallible in her doctrine, it follows, evidently, that they who are members of a church which disowns any such infallibility are not of the Church of Christ. A terrible consequence! — which, therefore, deserves to be seriously considered by all those who are not wholly indifferent whether their faith and religion be right or wrong.

Secondly. If the Church which Christ has established upon earth be proved to be infallible in her doctrine, it follows that the same arguments and texts which prove this infallibility are also a sufficient proof for every article of faith which that Church positively declares to be such; and, though there were no particular text in the written Word of God to prove those points, yet, if an infallible Church declares them to be articles of faith, the same Scripture which proves that Church to be infallible proves these to be infallible and incontestable truths.

As zealous as Protestants are against the Church's infallibility, they are forced to depend wholly upon her authority in many articles that cannot be evidently proved from any text of Scripture, yet are of very great importance.

1. The lawfulness for Christians to work upon Saturday, contrary, in appearance, to the express command of God, who bids us "keep the Sabbath holy," and tells us the seventh day of the week is that day. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work." Exod. xx. 8, 9, 10.

2. The lawfulness and validity of infant baptism, whereof there is no example in Scripture. And our Savior joins baptism with instruction, (Matt. xxviii. 19,) of which infants are incapable.

3. The validity or efficacy of the sacraments, though conferred by an heretical or wicked minister. The

Donatists are esteemed heretics, both by the Church of England and the Church of Rome, for denying this. Yet there is no text in Scripture for it, as St. Austin owns in his writings against them. 1 Cont. Cresc. C. 33.

4. The Church's authority is all we have both for the canon and divine inspiration of the Scriptures. For not one of the sacred penmen has determined in his writings what books are canonical and what not. St. Paul tells us, indeed, that "all Scripture is given by divine inspiration." 2 Tim. iii. 16. But how do we know that those very words were written by divine inspiration, or that the Epistle from whence they are taken is canonical, but from the authority of the Church? which made Dr. Cosin write thus, concerning the number of canonical books, (page 5 :) "for which," says he, "we have no better nor other external rule or testimony to guide us, than the constant voice of the Catholic and Universal Church, as it has been delivered to us, upon record, from one generation to another."

These instances, and many more, which I have omitted for brevity's sake, are, I think, an unanswerable proof, 1, of the necessity of admitting apostolical traditions for a rule of faith, and, 2, that, if Protestants are obliged to depend upon the authority even of a *fallible* Church, in many articles of great importance, which cannot be proved from Scripture, my inference is incontestable, that the same texts which prove the Church to be infallible are likewise a sufficient proof of every article of faith which that Church positively declares to be such.

Thirdly. If the Church established by Christ be infallible in her doctrine, it follows that there is no salvation out of this Church; for this is a part of her doctrine, grounded upon the words of Christ, saying, "He who hears you hears me, and he who despises you despises me." For surely they who despise God are not in the way of salvation; which deserves the most serious reflection.

Fourthly. If the Church established by Christ be proved to be infallible in her doctrine even to the world's end, then it follows, evidently, that she never fell into any error against faith, and that, as she was once the true Church, she always has been so, and must continue the same forever. This consequence overthrows the whole *reformation* at one blow; because the *reformation* never had any other pretence, or plausible color, than the supposed errors of that Church from which the *reformed* churches separated themselves. The errors and abuses of the Church of Rome was the great cry in the beginning of the *reformation*, as abuses in government is the usual cry of rebels against their sovereigns. This gave birth to all the *reformed* churches, and has ever since been their principal support; and, therefore, if it be plainly proved that the errors charged upon the Church are all imaginary and supposititious, if it be proved that the Church never fell, nor can fall, into any error against the revealed faith and doctrine taught by Christ and his apostles, the consequence will be, that the pretence of the reformation was a mere groundless fiction; that the Protestant religion, as it differs from the Roman Catholic Church, is without

foundation; and that Luther, the great patriarch of the *reformation*, and Calvin, who reformed the reformation of Luther, and others, who reformed them both, were no better than impostors and rebels against the Church. In effect, antiquity knew no difference between heretics and *reformers* of the Church's faith; they were always reputed synonymous terms; and there is no other mark to distinguish orthodox doctrine from heresy, than that the one is the doctrine of the Church of Christ, and the other is opposite to it, and, by having received its birth since the time of the apostles, has the infamous brand of novelty set upon it.

This fourth inference appears to me unanswerable, unless Protestants either have recourse to the poor shift of an invisible Church, — which I take to be no better than giving up the cause with an ill grace, — or can show that, at the beginning of the *reformation*, and many ages before it, there was a visible Church upon earth, which was not in communion with the see of Rome, yet was the true Church of Christ; the falsehood whereof I shall prove hereafter.

Lastly. If Christ has established an infallible Church on earth, it follows that she alone is the interpreter of God's revealed Word, the only judge of controversy, and supreme tribunal from which there is no appeal, either to private judgment, or any authority upon earth.

The truth of this consequence is so incontestable, that, though the first *reformers* shut their eyes against it, the *reformed* churches have since been forced to acknowledge that supreme authority in the representatives

even of a national church, which, but a few years before, they had disowned in the universal Church of Christ.

I shall content myself with producing one remarkable instance of it, in the proceedings of a Protestant synod, held at Dort, against the Arminians, anno 1618; for, though this synod was far from being either a general council, or assuming an infallibility to itself, yet it required an absolute submission to its decrees. The Arminians protested against the legality of the synod, pretending, chiefly, that the principal members of it were parties who had already declared themselves in their writings, and were, therefore, unqualified to be their judges. But this plea was unanimously overruled by the synod, and their reasons for rejecting it are very remarkable.

The English divines that were present gave this for their reason against it; because, if it were allowed, it would utterly overthrow the authority of the first four general councils, the members whereof, though they had, before their meeting together, writ against Arius, Macedonius, Nestorius, and Eutyches, were not thereby unqualified to be their judges.

The deputies of Hesse said that, if the plea of the Arminians were admitted, it would follow that there never had been, nor ever could be, assembled a legal council to terminate disputes, and condemn heresies, because the most zealous pastors and ablest divines were always the first in opposing the authors of them, both by word of mouth and writing.

Those of Bremen alleged that, if persons forfeited their right to sit as judges in a council by having declared themselves enemies to any new doctrine started in the Church, the growth of heresies would be unavoidable; because no man would venture to oppose it, for fear of prejudicing his own right. They added, that it was no consequence that they were therefore judges in their own cause; because, in contests about religion, it is not any man's particular cause, but the common cause of God and the Church, that is to be determined. Others, finally, said that it was not lawful to go out of the Church for judges, but that she herself, in her pastors, was the only judge of controversies in religion.

These were the principal reasons alleged against the Arminians, to show the unreasonableness and irregularity of their protesting against the authority of the synod; and the result of all was that, if they persisted in their refusal to submit to its decision, they should be regarded as persons cut off from the Protestant communion, and treated accordingly.

But could those of the synod be so blind as not to see that all this was cutting Martin Luther's throat, and stabbing the *reformation* to the very heart? However, the decrees of this synod were solemnly approved and received by the Huguenots in France, who were not permitted by the state to send their deputies to it; and, in a national synod, held at Alets, anno 1620, they bound themselves by oath to believe and teach the doctrine established by this synod.

This, I think, is an unanswerable proof that Protestants themselves have been obliged to own that there is a supreme tribunal established by Christ, and vested with a full authority to decide all controversies in religion sovereignly. And since they have likewise owned that this authority was lodged even in a national and fallible synod, the last consequence I have drawn from the supposition of an infallible Church is above all dispute. For surely that authority can never be refused to the supreme tribunal of an infallible Church, which they have asserted to be the right and prerogative of a tribunal in all respects inferior to it. But may not all the powerful reasons alleged by that synod to confute the plea of the Arminians, and the sentence it pronounced against them, be justly considered as a solemn authentic condemnation of the first founders of the *reformed* churches, pronounced by Protestants themselves?

Let us draw out at length the parallel between Arminius and Luther, and consider the merits of their cause by the justest weights and measures. Arminius had been baptized in the Protestant church, and so had Luther received his baptism in the Church of Rome. Arminius had preached and taught the doctrine of his mother church, and so had Luther for several years. Arminius began insensibly to broach new doctrines, that is, opinions before unknown to his church; this was his crime. Luther was guilty of the very same. Arminius was at first condemned by the writings of his fellow-ministers, and Luther by the living voice of the whole Christian Church in the world, which was entirely

against him, as will appear hereafter. The doctrine of Arminius caused great disturbances in the United Provinces, and that of Luther threw all Europe into disorder. At last, a synod was called at Dort, to examine the doctrine of Arminius, and a general council at Trent, to examine that of Luther. The Arminians declined, as much as they could, to appear before the synod, but were compelled to it by the States, whose subjects they were. The Lutherans refused flatly to appear at the council, to which they were invited, but could not be compelled, being sheltered by their respective sovereigns. The Arminians published their protestation against the legality of the synod, and the Lutherans did the same in reference to the council, and gave chiefly the same frivolous reason for it, viz., that the Pope's legates, bishops, and prelates, assembled in it, being declared parties, were not duly qualified to be their judges. The protestation of the Arminians was overruled by the synod, and that of the Lutherans by the council. Both assemblies asserted their authority; and, in a word, the Arminians were condemned by the Synod of Dort, and the Lutherans by the Council of Trent. Now, Protestants own that the Arminians were justly condemned at Dort; they must, therefore, likewise own that the Lutherans and Calvinists, with the rest of the *reformed* churches, were justly condemned at Trent.

If this be not *argumentum ad hominem*, that is, confuting an adversary from his own principle and practice, there never was such a thing in the world. For with what justice can Protestants condemn Arminius, and at the same time absolve Luther? Or with what color of

reason can they vindicate the authority of the Synod of Dort, and cry down that of the Council of Trent? Can there be one single argument produced to prove that the Arminians were bound in conscience, as the synod told them, to submit to its decrees, which will not be stronger, by many degrees, to prove that both Lutherans and Calvinists were under an indispensable obligation of conscience to submit to the Council of Trent? And let me tell the gentlemen of the *reformation*, that, if they had submitted, as they were certainly bound to do, the *reformation* had been stifled in its cradle, and there would have been no work, in the following century, for the Synod of Dort.

If any one be so weak as to allege that the Synod of Dort had truth on its side, but not the Council of Trent, I answer that this is begging the very point in question, which I shall not have the complaisance to grant. For if the Synod of Dort had an unquestionable authority to decide sovereignly what was true or false doctrine with relation to the Arminians, I am sure the Council of Trent had full as ample a patent, and was at least as well qualified, to judge the doctrine of the *reformed* churches. And, therefore, if the Arminians were bound to submit to the synod, the Lutherans and Calvinists were likewise bound to submit to the council.

But enough of this. The importance of the consequences I have drawn from the supposition of an infallible Church shows with what seriousness this question ought to be examined by all that have a true

concern for the salvation of their souls. For, if Christ has effectually established such a Church, and if the Church in communion with the see of Rome can alone produce her charter to prove herself to be that infallible Church, whoever refuses to hear her voice is, according to the sentence pronounced by Christ himself, *to be reputed as a heathen and a publican.* Matt. xviii. 17.

CHAPTER I.

SECTION I.

INFALLIBILITY PROMISED BY CHRIST TO HIS CHURCH.

As the divine Wisdom has permitted many sacred truths in holy writ to be wrapped up in dark figures or enigmatical expressions, both to excite our industry in searching, and exercise our faith in believing, when they are explained to us by sufficient authority, so there are others so very clear and intelligible, that their meaning is obvious, and lies open to every sincere and unbiased reader. Of this sort are many historical and moral tracts, both in the Old and New Testament; and I dare confidently say that all the principal texts relating to the infallibility of the Church are of this nature.

The Word of God teaches it in the plainest and strongest terms. The promises of Christ are not wrapped up in parables, or a prophetic language that requires deep searching to dive into it; but they are delivered in words so easy and intelligible that any man, who makes it not his study to deceive himself, may understand them. The solemnity also of the circumstances wherein Christ made those sacred engagments to his Church is so remarkable, that they cannot but imprint an idea of some extraordinary favor bestowed upon her.

His first promise of protecting his Church against all the powers of darkness was addressed to St. Peter, in reward of that noble profession of his divinity "which

neither flesh nor blood, but the Father which is in heaven, had revealed unto him." Matt. xvi. 17. The other promises were made at his last supper, in that sermon which is, as it were, his last will and testament, every word whereof seems to be the overflowing of a heart filled with concern for his future Church. It was then that Christ unbosomed himself to his apostles, as a friend or father, comforted them in their affliction for his approaching departure, and, as a pledge of his unalterable love to his Church, bequeathed to them "the Spirit of Truth," to be her guide and teacher to the world's end; all which he ratified again a few moments before his ascension into heaven, when he gave his apostles their commission "to teach and baptize all nations," and encouraged them to undertake it, with a promise of his perpetual assistance. Matt. xxviii. 20.

I appeal, then, to the Word of God, for the truth and justice of the cause which I have undertaken. The Word of God shall be the judge between the Church of Rome and the *reformed* churches. It is by this rule I desire that this important cause may be decided.

It is true, indeed, if I were to write against infidels, there would be need of other proofs, because the authority of Scripture would be questioned by them. But, since the cause depending is not between Christians and infidels, but between Christians and Christians, who all believe the Scriptures to have been written by divine inspiration, and to contain nothing but undoubted truth, there can be no exception made against the arms I intend to make use of, in defence of my cause. Neither can I be accused of "running round in a circle," as is the usual objection; because the divine authority of Scripture is as a *postulatum*, which I take for granted, and use it as an argument *ad hominem*. And, therefore, if I make it appear that the doctrine of infallibility is the doctrine of the gospel, the doctrine of Jesus Christ, who is truth itself, then I

shall have reason to hope, that all those whom neither interest nor passion can hinder from sincerely desiring to save their souls will make it their endeavor to seek the truth in that Church where it is infallibly taught.

First, then, let us consider our Savior's words to St. Peter, recorded in the 16th chapter of St. Matthew. I give them the first place, as being the clearest and strongest proof of an infallible Church. For they contain an absolute and unconditional promise; there being no condition, either expressed or hinted at, in the whole text. It is a promise delivered in such clear and strong terms that, without straining the text in a very notorious manner, it can bear no other sense than that in which the Roman Catholic Church has always understood it.

The occasion of this promise is also very remarkable, as I have already hinted. St. Peter's name till then was Simon Barjona. But God, having preordained him to be the chief pillar of his Church, enlightened him, in a particular manner, with a distinct faith of the divinity of Christ, whereof he made this solemn profession: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Matt. xvi. 16. Hereupon our Savior dignified him with a title suitable both to the firmness of his faith and the eminent station he was to hold, and gave him the name of Cephas, or Peter; both which signify a rock. And then, as a further mark of distinction, he thus addresses to him the promise I speak of: "Thou art Peter, [that is, a rock,] and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 18.

It is not my business here to examine what prerogative this gave to St. Peter, in being alone called the rock upon which the Church was to be built. I shall only make my reflections upon the promise itself, by which Christ has engaged his word that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church" that is built

upon it; which, if it be not a proof of an infallible Church, I own I am at a loss to find words clear and strong enough to express it. What other meaning can we give to the words of Christ, that will bear any connection with their obvious and natural signification? That they contain a promise is plain; that the promise which they contain is made to the Church, is no less plain; and, since all God's promises have a relation to some favor, it remains only to consider what this favor is.

First, then, Christ promises "to build his Church upon a rock." What does this mean? Is it probable that Christ, who foresaw every thing that was to happen, would have told St. Peter that his Church should be built upon a rock, if he had foreseen its future fall? Had he no design that the rock upon which his Church was to be built should be a firm and lasting foundation to it? Or did he act by chance, and without end or design? But Christ himself has answered all these questions in the following words: "I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock." Matt. vii. 24, 25. Whence it is plain that Christ, by promising that his Church should be built upon a rock, intended to assure us that its foundation should be so strong, so deeply laid, that it should stand in spite of all storms, oppositions, or any efforts whatever to make it fall. And, therefore, to prevent the very possibility of all but wilful mistakes, in the second part of the promise he explains himself, and declares positively, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Which words contain two things: 1st, they imply a general prediction of what should happen to the Church from the efforts and malice of her enemies, who should oppose or endeavor to corrupt her holy doctrine; and, 2dly, a positive assurance that all their strength and malice,

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which our Savior calls "the gates of hell," shall never prevail against her.

The prediction has been fully verified. The Jews, the professed enemies of Christ, were the first champions of Satan who declared themselves openly, and made many furious assaults upon his Church. These were soon followed by several apostate Christians, as the Ebionites, the Nicolaites, the Corinthians, and many others, who conspired together to corrupt the purity of her doctrine. But the ten bloody persecutions raised by the heathen emperors in the three first centuries aimed at nothing less than to extirpate the Christian religion, and destroy the Church, root and branch.

When these storms ceased, and the Church was delivered from foreign enemies, her own bowels again rose up against her, in so violent a manner as seemed to threaten her utter ruin. Arius and his followers, supported by the secular power of Christian emperors, and a great number of apostate bishops, made a furious war upon her for many years together. All the means that artifice or malice could suggest were employed to undermine the very foundations of religion. The most zealous Catholic bishops were either murdered, or imprisoned, or sent into banishment; so that, the wolves being let in amongst the flock, every thing seemed to tend to the utter extirpation of the Catholic faith. This was the state of the Church in those turbulent times; and her condition has, in some measure, been the same, from time to time, whenever the devil and his ministers made any new attempt upon the purity of her faith; as has happened almost in every age from the very infancy of the Church to this time downwards.

So here we see the "powers of hell" have always been armed against the Church, and the prediction implied in the fore-mentioned text has been fully verified. But have we not as good security of the effects of Christ's promises as for the event of his predictions?

Is he not equally infallible when he promises blessings as when he foretells calamities and disasters? There can be no doubt of it. And, therefore, though the powers of darkness will never cease to make war upon the Church, their efforts will always be as vain as the winds and rain against a house that is built upon a rock. And, as her faith has stood the shock, both against the united force of Jews and pagans, and the deceitful reasoning of Arians, Nestorians, Eutychians, Donatists, Pelagians, and others, so will it remain immovable and incorruptible to the world's end. And this is so manifest a truth that, to deny it, we must either interpret the Scriptures backwards, or give our Savior flatly the lie. For, if words retain their usual signification, we cannot charge the Church of Christ with error, even against any one single article of faith, but we must draw this impious consequence from it, that he was either ignorant of the event of his promise or unfaithful to it; and that, after having in so solemn a manner engaged his sacred word to St. Peter that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church," he has, nevertheless, delivered her up to the power of Satan, to be destroyed by him.

This consequence will appear undeniable, if we consider the two following truths, viz., 1, that faith is essential to the constitution of the Church; and, 2, that heresy destroys faith. For it plainly follows hence that, if the whole Church falls into heresy, she is without faith, and is no more the Church she was before than a man can continue to be a man without a soul. The Church of Christ (as I shall show hereafter) can only be that which believes, wholly and entirely, the doctrine that was taught by Christ, and delivered to her by the apostles. If, therefore, she ever renounced any part of that doctrine, does it not follow that she then turned apostate? that she ceased from that moment to be the chaste spouse of Christ? that "the gates of hell prevailed against her"? and that, by consequence, our

Savior, in permitting that to happen which he promised should not happen, was unfaithful to his word?

Again: Christ either foresaw that "the gates of hell should not prevail against his Church," or he foresaw it not. If not, then he promised he knew not what, which is blasphemy. But if he did foresee it, then (since his foresight was infallible in every thing) the event must answer it infallibly; and so it must be infallibly true that the gates of hell never have prevailed, nor ever will prevail, against his Church.

In a word, I take this to be a demonstration. The gates of hell (according to Christ's own words) will never prevail against his Church; but, if she falls into any error against faith, the gates of hell prevail against her; therefore she cannot fall into any error against faith. Therefore she is infallible in all matters of faith.

If it be asked how any congregation or society of men can be infallible, since all men (as the Psalmist says) are liars, that is, subject to errors, my answer is, that all men of themselves are certainly subject to errors, even in the most ordinary things; but much more in matters of faith, which are above human reason. And, therefore, if the infallibility of the Church was to depend upon the judgment, wit, or learning, of men, it would have but a very weak foundation, and would be like "the house of the foolish man, built upon the sand, which was overthrown by the winds and flood that beat upon it." Matt. vii. 26. But our Savior was not this foolish man; for he did not tell St. Peter that his Church should be built upon the sand, but that it should be built upon a rock, and that therefore "the gates of hell should not prevail against it;" and we cannot doubt but he has made good his words, and has found means to do it, notwithstanding the natural weakness and fallibility of the members whereof she was to be composed.

SECTION II.

THE MEANS PROMISED BY CHRIST TO RENDER HIS CHURCH INFALLIBLE.

The means, then, by which this great work was to be brought about, have no less their warrant and security from the word of God, and promises of Christ, than the thing itself. If this be clearly made out, the evidence will be so full as to leave no room for any further dispute, unless it be for dispute's sake. We grant, then, that no human industry, wit, or learning, is sufficient to secure the Church from falling into error, and that nothing can render her infallible but the assistance and direction of an infallible Guide. But Christ has taken care to provide such a Guide for his Church, a Guide of infinite wisdom; and has promised that this Guide shall "lead her into all truth," and remain with her "to the end of the world;" all which stands recorded in the gospels, in such plain and express terms that men must wilfully shut their eyes not to see it.

Our Savior's words, spoken to his apostles, and recorded by St. John in his 14th chapter, are these: "I will ask my Father, and he will send you another Comforter, to abide with you forever." John xiv. 16. And, soon after, he informs them who this Comforter is to be, and to what end his Father will send him. "The Comforter," says Christ, "which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John xiv. 26. This promise is again repeated in the 16th chapter, which contains a continuation of the same discourse. "I have yet many things to say unto you; but you cannot bear them now. However, when the Spirit of

truth is come, he will lead you into all truth." John xvi. 12.

Here we have the means, by which the Church of Christ is to be forever protected against the gates of hell, clearly and distinctly set down, viz., "the perpetual assistance of the divine Spirit, teaching the Church and leading her into all truth;" nay, and these means secured to her by him "to whom all power is given in heaven and earth." And who can suspect that Christ should ever abandon his Church, and suffer her to become a prey to her enemies, after the sacred engagement of so many promises to the contrary?

But, if it be objected that all the fore-mentioned texts contain no more than a promise of the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, which was accomplished ten days after Christ's ascension into heaven, I answer that this cannot be. For, though that be a part of the promise, it is not the whole. And, therefore, as that part was fully performed, we cannot doubt but the other part will be so too.

That it is not the whole promise is manifest; because one part of it says expressly that the Comforter, or Holy Ghost, shall abide with them "forever;" which, though addressed to the apostles, as the whole sermon at our Savior's last supper was, yet, like many other truths contained in it, could not regard their persons alone, — for they were not to live "forever" — but comprehended likewise all those who were to succeed them in after ages. And that this was the intent of our Savior's promise appears clearly from his last words before his ascension, recorded by St. Matthew: "All power," says Christ, "is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them, &c. And lo! I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. For in what manner was Christ to be always with them, since he was then upon the point of withdrawing from them his visible presence? It was, doubtless, by the invisible

grace, assistance, and protection, of the divine Spirit And, since this is promised to continue "even to the consummation of the world," it explains the former word "forever," and renders it manifest that the forementioned texts are not to be limited to the apostles, but that the Church throughout all ages has a title to the promise which they contain.

Which truth is yet further confirmed from the end, or motive, for which the promise was made. Now, this was no other than that the Church should be guided into all truth. And has not the Church stood in need of being guided into all truth in every age, as much as in the time of the apostles? Surely rather more; because, the farther we are removed from the source of any truth, which depends upon authority more than natural reason, the harder it is to trace our way back to it; and, therefore, if the divine assistance was necessary to guide the Church into all truth, even in those happy times when the apostles themselves, who had been taught in the school of Christ, instructed her either by word of mouth or by their writings, it cannot be denied but this assistance has been at least full as needful to her in after ages, when the words and writings of the apostles, by the distance of time, could not avoid sharing the fate of other authors, of being liable to misinterpretations, false glosses, changes, and corruptions; unless the same infallible Guide, which preserved the Church from error in her infancy, had continued ever since to conduct her in the paths of truth.

What reason, then, is there to think that Christ should withdraw his divine Spirit from the Church, at a time when his assistance was most needful to her? Or that the engagement of an unlimited and unconditional promise should ever become void, whilst the sole end and motive of it was not only fully subsisting, but rather more pressingly calling upon it than at first? Or must we accuse Christ of inconstancy, and say he

was less tender of his Church in process of time than when he espoused her first, and sealed the contract with his precious blood? If so, then St. Paul made choice of a very improper pattern to set before the Ephesian husbands, in exhorting them "to love their wives as Christ loved his Church." Eph. v. 25. But St. Paul remembered these words of Hosea: "I will espouse thee to me forever: I will espouse thee to me in faith," (Hos. ii. 19, 20,) and, therefore, hazarded nothing in recommending the love of Christ to his Church as a perfect pattern of a constant and unchangeable love; of which it would come very short, if he should ever leave her to be corrupted and adulterated with false doctrine, as Protestants say he has.

But St. Paul foresaw no such change. He doubted not but Christ would be forever faithful to his spouse, and, as the most effectual pledge of his love, "present her to himself without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Eph. v. 27. He therefore calls the Church "the pillar and ground of truth," (1 Tim. iii. 15;) which would be flatly false if she were capable of teaching any thing contrary to God's revealed Word. For the same reason, Christ himself has declared that "he who will not hear the Church shall be reputed as a heathen and a publican." Matt. xviii. 17. And can any man deserve these infamous characters, for not hearing a Church that shall teach false doctrine? Finally, for the same reason, Christ has pronounced that "he who believes shall be saved, and he who believes not shall be damned." Mark xvi. 16. But what is it we are bound to believe under pain of eternal damnation? It is, doubtless, the doctrine of that Church which Christ established on earth; for there can be no other true one. And is it possible that Christ should oblige mankind, under pain of eternal damnation, to believe a Church which, he foresaw, would seduce them in process of time? Shall a man be damned for not believing a seducer?

This implies a contradiction to another part of Christ's own doctrine, who expressly commands us "to beware of false prophets." Matt. vii. 15. For, if we are bound to beware of them, and yet the Church herself may turn false prophet and mislead us, then we are both commanded to beware of her, and, at the same time, threatened with eternal damnation if we refuse to believe her. What strange stuff is this! What incoherence do men run themselves into, when they once abandon the truth! But Christ, in commanding us to beware of false prophets, has set a mark of infamy upon all broachers of new doctrine, to distinguish them from his Church, which, therefore, he commands us to believe under pain of eternal damnation; and, by laying this command upon us, he showed plainly that it was his intention to establish an infallible Church upon earth; a Church that should be a safe and unerring guide to those who followed her doctrine; finally, a Church that should be taught and guided by the Spirit of truth, even unto the end of the world.

Thus we see the many sacred testimonies upon which the belief of an infallible Church is founded. I know very well that no text of holy Scripture is so clear but persons of much wit and little sincerity may find interpretations to perplex it, or set it in a false light. The true sense of it may be eluded by precarious distinctions, or perverted by false glosses; as scarce any man can express himself so clearly but wit and malice may put a misconstruction upon his words. But the question is not, whether the texts I have produced may, with some pain and study, be interpreted otherwise than the Roman Catholic Church has always understood them, but whether, in their natural, obvious, and literal sense, they do not lead an unbiased reader to the idea and belief of an infallible Church. This certainly is a point which deserves to be taken seriously into consideration by all sincere lovers of truth.

Now, then, let us suppose that the contradictories of

the texts I have quoted were found in Holy Writ. As, for instance, suppose our Savior had said to St. Peter, "I will not build my Church upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall prevail against it." Suppose he had said to his apostles, "I will not be with you unto the end of the world. I will not send the Holy Ghost to abide with you forever. He shall not teach you all things, nor lead you into all truth." Finally, suppose St. Paul had positively declared that "the Church is not the pillar and ground of truth;" — would not all men of sound sense have concluded, from such texts, that there is no such thing as an infallible Church on earth? They certainly would; because the obvious and natural meaning of them is so plain that it is impossible not to draw that consequence from them. Now, if one part of two contradictories cannot but force a man of an unbiased judgment to conclude against the doctrine of infallibility, the other part is surely of equal force to oblige him to conclude in favor of it. So that it is nothing to the purpose whether Protestants can, or cannot, strain the texts I have produced from their obvious and natural meaning; but it is very much to the purpose to consider whether they can bring any evidence from Scripture, to disprove the infallibility of the Church, of equal strength and clearness to the texts I have brought to prove it. For, if they cannot, (as I am very sure they cannot,) then it is manifest that the Word of God, and, by consequence, the truth, is on the Roman Catholic side, and against them.

I shall conclude this chapter with some quotations from the ancient fathers, to convince the reader that the belief of an infallible Church was the primitive faith; and that those great lights of the Christian Church understood the texts I have quoted as Roman Catholics now do.

SECTION III.

THE FAITH OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH RELATING TO THE MATTER UNDER DEBATE.

In the beginning of the 16th century, that is, just before the pretended reformation, the article of infallibility was believed and professed by the whole Catholic Church. And the Church of England, in her homily concerning the peril of idolatry, 3d part, (of which we shall have more hereafter,) tells us that Popery had then been the religion of whole Christendom for eight hundred years and more. This brings the doctrine of infallibility, which is an essential part of Popery, as high as the 7th century. Here, then, Protestants are obliged to show in which of the preceding ages this doctrine was first broached, and regarded by the Church as a novelty. For, if they cannot, they must confess it to be derived from the apostles themselves.

But I shall save them this fruitless labor, by showing that it was taught in the primitive ages. The Church of England has received the first four general councils, (act 1 Eliz. c. 1,) the first of which was held anno 325, and the last of them anno 451. Now, let us see whether these councils, which were the representatives of the Catholic Church, were not held to be infallible in their decisions of faith. St. Gregory (Epist. 24) speaks thus of all four together: "I do profess to reverence the first four councils as I reverence the first four books of the gospel." And I presume St. Gregory believed the Gospels to be infallible in their doctrine. St. Leo (Epist. 73) says, "The Council of Calcedon was assembled by the Holy Ghost." St. Cyril (Epist. and Anast.) writes thus of the Council of Ephesus: "How can it be doubted that Christ did preside in that holy and great council?" And St. Athanasius (ad Episc

Afric.) says, "The word of God by the Nicene Council does remain forever." This, certainly, is the language of persons believing the Church to be infallible in the decisions of her representatives — the general councils. Let us now see what the fathers have written of the Church in general.

St. Irenæus, who lived in the age immediately after Christ and his apostles, has the following words, (Lib. iii. c. 4:) "Truth is not to be sought from others which you have easily from the Church; with whom the apostles have fully deposited all truth; that whosoever desires it may have from it the living waters."

This cannot be said of a church that is capable of leading her children into errors. For a church that can err has not all truth deposited with her.

St. Cyprian, who lived in the third century, writes thus: "Christ, in the gospel, when his disciples went away from him, as he was speaking, turning to the twelve, said, 'What! will you also leave me?' Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe, and have known, that thou art the Son of the living God.' Peter speaks there, upon whom the Church was built, declaring, in the name of the Church, that, though great numbers of such stubborn and self-willed people as will not submit become deserters, yet the Church will never fall from Christ; which Church is the people united to the priest, and the flock following their pastor." Cypr. Epist. 69, ad Florentium Papinimum.

Again: (Lib. de Unit. Eccl.) "The Church, having received the light of Christ, spreads its rays through the whole world. Yet it is one light which is thus diffused. Neither is the unity of the body at all injured by it. By her fertility her branches reach over the earth, and every place is watered by her copious streams; yet there is but one head and one fountain, one mother rich in her numerous issue. By her fruitfulness we are born; we are nourished with her milk, and we are

enlivened by her spirit. The spouse of Christ cannot be an adulteress; she is uncorrupt and pure. She knows but one house, and, with a chaste modesty, secures the sanctity of one chamber. She it is that preserves us for heaven, and gives to her children, whom she has brought forth, the inheritance of a crown."

If St. Cyprian's testimony be of any weight, we have here the doctrine of infallibility clearly taught by him. He tells us in the first passage that "the Church will never fall from Christ." Therefore she will always maintain the doctrine which Christ has taught. And in the second that "the spouse of Christ cannot become an adulteress, but that she is uncorrupt and pure." Therefore she cannot be corrupted with false doctrine; which is just what Roman Catholics now believe and teach.

St. Cyril of Alexandria (Dial. de Trin. Lib. 4) writes thus: "He gave the name of *rock* to nothing else but the unshaken and constant faith of the disciple; on which the Church of Christ is so settled and established as never to fall, but to bear up against the gates of hell, and so to remain forever."

The first part of this passage is very much magnified, by Protestant writers, against St. Peter's supremacy. But this being foreign to my subject, I shall only throw a rub in their way, and so proceed. As St. Cyril says that "Christ gave the name of the rock to nothing else but the unshaken and constant faith of St. Peter," so St. Jerom (Epist. 61, ad Pammachium) says, as expressly, that "it was not St. Peter's body, but his faith, that walked upon the waters." T. 2, p. 254. Now, both these fathers waived the literal meaning of the scriptural text, and delivered only the allegorical, or causal, sense of it, as being fittest for their purpose when they wrote. And, in that sense, their expressions were not improper; because St. Peter's faith was the only meritorious cause both of his walking upon the waters and of Christ's promise that his Church should be built upon him.

And, therefore, as it would be impertinent to conclude, from St. Jerom's words, that St. Peter's body, or person, did not walk upon the waters, so it does not very much recommend the good sense of Protestant writers to conclude, from St. Cyril's words, that he intended to exclude St. Peter's person from being the rock upon which Christ promised to build his Church.

But I am less surprised at their not distinguishing between the allegorical and literal interpretations of scriptures than I am at their overlooking the plain meaning of the second part of St. Cyril's words, viz., "on which the Church of Christ is so settled and established as never to fall, but to bear up against the gates of hell, and to remain forever;" in which the doctrine of infallibility is as strongly and clearly asserted as words can express it. I shall only add some passages from St. Austin, and so end this chapter.

Aug. Enarr. in Psalm 57, Num. 6, Tom. 4, p. 545, ["They have gone astray from the womb, and spoken lies." Ps. 57.] "Were they therefore gone astray from the womb because they have spoken lies? Or, rather, have they not spoken lies because they were gone astray from the womb? For it is in the Church's womb that truth remains. Whosoever is separated from this womb of the Church must of necessity speak lies. I say he must necessarily speak lies who refuses to be conceived, or, being conceived, has been thrown out by the mother."

Serm. de Symb. ad Catech. Tom. 6, p. 554. "After a confession of the Trinity follows the Holy Church. Here is shown God and his temple, which is the Holy Church, the one Church, the true Church, the Catholic Church, which fights against all heresies. Fight she may, but she cannot be foiled. All heresies have gone out from her like useless branches lopped off from the vine, but she remains in her root, in her vine, in her charity. 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against her.'"

Enarr. 2, in Psalm 101, upon these words, "In the

assembling the people together in one, and kings to serve our Lord, he answered him in the way of his strength," St. Austin writes thus: "But that Church which was spread through all nations now has no longer a being. It is quite lost. This is the cry of those who are not in the Church. O impudent clamor! She is not, because you do not belong to her! See that you have not for that reason lost your being; for she will have a being, though you have none. This abominable and accursed calumny, full of presumption and deceit, void of all truth, wisdom, and reason, idle, temerarious, rash, and pernicious, the Spirit of God foresaw, when, even as it were against them, he proclaimed her unity 'in assembling the people in one, and kings to serve our Lord;' because there were to arise some that would say against her, It is true she was, but now she is perished. Show me, says she, the fewness of my days. I do not inquire for my days in the next world. Those are without end. It is not those days of eternity I ask for. I desire to know my continuance in this world. These days I desire you to show me; and he has shown me neither, was the answer insignificant. And who was it but he that is the very way? And what was the information he gave me? 'Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.'"

And now I leave it to the judgment of any impartial reader, whether the fathers I have quoted were Protestants or Catholics in their principle relating to the matter under debate. They wrote against the heretics of their times, who all pretended the Church had failed. But they, on the contrary, not only maintained that she had not failed, (nay, St. Austin calls it an impudent clamor, an abominable and accursed calumny, to say she had failed,) but also that she cannot fail; that it is in the Church's womb that truth remains; that, being the spouse of Christ, she cannot become an adulteress, but will always be pure and uncorrupt in her doctrine; that she will always remain in her root, and continue to do so

o the end of the world; all which St. Austin proves from these two texts: "The gates of hell shall never prevail against it," (Matt. xvi. 18,) and "Lo! I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Matt. xxviii. 20. Whence it follows that all the passages I have quoted contain as full a condemnation of the present *reformed* churches as those of the heretics against whom they were written; and that not only the Word of God, but the whole current of antiquity, is flatly against them; unless they will call unto their assistance old excommunicated heretics, and shelter themselves under the protection of the professed enemies of the Church of Christ. For let them look back as far as they please into primitive ages, it is amongst heretics alone they will find any friends. These were the men that pleaded for a fallible church; and their arguments, which the fathers answered, are now revived by Protestant writers, and turned against the Church of Rome, as we shall see hereafter.

It was for this reason that Luther no sooner began his pretended reformation, but he declared open war against the fathers, whom he treated with as much arrogance and contempt as if they had been a parcel of blockheads, or mere schoolboys. Good manners, indeed, ought to have made him forbear the latter, but the badness of his cause obliged him to the former. For he could not but be against antiquity, when antiquity was against him; and let the *reformed* churches put the fairest glosses they please upon their separation from the Church of Rome, the antiquity of her doctrine, maintained in the primitive ages by persons who certainly delivered the public faith of the Church in their times, is an argument of such weight against them as will ever carry the cause in the judgment of any thinking man, in whom the love of the world has not stifled all sense of a future state.

The reason, therefore, why I have produced the testimony of these ancient fathers' maintaining the Church's

infallibility against the heretics of their times, is to convince the reader that the primitive Church understood the promises of Christ, which are the sole foundation of her infallibility, in the same sense as Roman Catholics now do; and that, by consequence, the sense we give them is not a precarious interpretation of private judgment, but has the whole authority of the Church of Christ to support it; since those eminent saints and doctors cannot be regarded otherwise than as authentic witnesses of what her public faith was in those primitive ages.

CHAPTER II.

SECTION I.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FUNDAMENTALS AND NON-FUNDAMENTALS EXAMINED.

THEY who, in spite of the most solemn promises of Christ, are resolved that there shall be no such thing as an infallible Church, have found out two ways to elude the force of them: 1. By tacking a condition to all God's promises, which shall be fully answered hereafter. And, 2. By distinguishing between fundamentals and non-fundamentals; whereby they pretend to baffle all the evidence Catholics produce to prove their point.

They say, then, that the promises of Christ, as also the words of St. Paul, regard only such articles of faith as are fundamental, that is, absolutely necessary to salvation, according to their system. And so they allow the Church to be infallible in them, but not in other points, which are not fundamental.

With this distinction, they think themselves safely intrenched; though it be, in reality, using the Word of God as familiarly as a logical question, in which any precarious distinction is laid hold of that but serves to stave off an argument, and keep the defendant from being *nonplused*. But surely some more respect is due to the sacred Word of God; and before a person undertakes to limit the sense of it, he ought to consider, very seriously, whether such a limitation be grounded in the Word of God itself; whether he offers no violence to the

text, by wresting it, from the sense intended by the Holy Ghost, to one prompted by the prejudice of a party-cause; whether his interpretation be in any manner agreeable to the sense of the ancient Church; finally, whether, by so limiting the Word of God, he will not draw on himself this curse pronounced by St. John, in his Revelations: "If any one shall add unto these things, God will add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of this book, God will take away his part out of the book of life." Rev. xxii. 18. If the enemies of infallibility had taken these precautions to heart, we should never have been acquainted with their distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals; for it is not only without any ground in the sacred text, but a mere forced interpretation upon it.

However, I presume it is to the first part of this distinction we are principally indebted for that charity, which Protestants so much boast of, in allowing salvation to be attainable, and, by consequence, all means necessary to it to be found, in the Church of Rome. Antonius de Dominis, an apostate archbishop of Spalatro, is said to have first imported this contraband merchandise into England, and it was greedily taken up, and is used by many Protestant writers. Dr. Potter tells us (p. 63) that "the most necessary and fundamental truths which constitute a church, are, on both sides, unquestioned." Dr. Stillingfleet assures us, likewise, in his Rational Account of the Grounds of the Protestant Religion, (p. 54,) that "the Church of England makes no articles of faith but such as have the testimony and approbation of the whole Christian world of all ages, and are acknowledged to be such by Rome itself." And Mr. Thorndike, in his Epilogue, (p. 146,) says, "I must, and do, freely profess that I find no position necessary to salvation prohibited, none destructive to salvation enjoined to be believed, by the Church of Rome."

This important concession, (which will always rise

up in judgment against *reformed* churches,) extorted from our adversaries by the evidence of truth, was, but a few years ago, confirmed, in the most solemn and authentic manner, by the Protestant University of Helmstat, (April 28, anno 1707,) upon occasion of the match proposed between the Princess of Wolfenbuttel and the Emperor Charles, who insisted upon this condition, that the princess, who was a Protestant, should conform to the Church of Rome. Whereupon the duke, her father, sent to the divines of Helmstat, to have their decision of the following case, viz., "Whether a Protestant princess, who is to be married to a Catholic prince, may, with a safe conscience, embrace the Roman Catholic religion." And their decision, which is contained in a large printed sheet, begins thus: —

"We answer, that the question propounded cannot be solved solidly without deciding, first, whether or no the Catholics are in fundamental errors, or such as are inconsistent with salvation; or, which amounts to the same, whether the constitution of the Romish Church be such as one may practise in it the true worship of God, and attain to salvation. Our answer to this second query, on which the first depends, is without hesitation in the affirmative, for these three reasons. ——"

Then they proceed to expound their reasons, which are too long for me to insert; but the following words are remarkable: "Neither can it be deemed that the Romish Church is not a true Church, wherein the ministry of God's Word and the use of sacraments subsist. For, if she were no more, or had never been a true Church, all her members would be in a state of damnation, and irrevocably lost; which none amongst us would dare to advance. Nay, Melancthon himself has maintained that the Roman Church did not cease being the true Church," &c. And towards the end, I find this paragraph: "Having demonstrated that the foundation of religion subsists in the Roman Catholic Church, so that one may be orthodox, and live and die well, and

obtain salvation in it, it is easy to decide the question propounded." They, therefore, gave their judgment that the Princess of Wolfenbuttel might safely change her religion, and become a member of the Church of Rome, to qualify herself for her marriage.

Here we have the judgment of a whole Protestant university, given on a very solemn occasion, 1, that the true worship of God is practised in the Church of Rome; 2, that she never ceased to be a true Church, for which we quote Melancthon's authority; 3, that her members may be orthodox, and live and die well, and obtain salvation — nay, that none amongst them dare maintain that the members of the Church of Rome are in a state of damnation. And all this they infer from this avowed principle, viz., "because that Church was never guilty of any fundamental error."

The first part, therefore, of the distinction, namely, "that the Church cannot err in fundamentals," is most certainly true. However, I cannot let it pass without drawing some consequences from it, before I offer my reasons against the second part, which denies her infallibility in points that are not fundamental.

The first consequence I draw from it is, that the Protestants of England are guilty of the blackest calumny and injustice, in charging the Church of Rome with idolatry. For who can be so blind as not to see that the charge of idolatry is not only a flat contradiction to their owning that she never erred in fundamentals, but wholly inconsistent with their so much magnified charity in allowing salvation to be attainable in that Church? What! can a Church be orthodox, nay, infallible, in fundamentals, and yet fall into idolatry? Can the Divine Spirit be said to lead her into all fundamental truths, and, at the same time, permit her to teach "that divine worship is to be paid to creatures"? Or is salvation consistent with the practice of it? These incoherences are so manifest, that, if calumny be a deadly sin, and restitution of fame an indispensable duty, truly I can-

not see how the authors or abettors of so black a calumny as is that of charging a whole Christian Church with idolatry can have any pretence to salvation, without making that Church as effectual a reparation of honor as the divines of Helmstat have already done. Nay, the reparation ought to be as general and public as the slander has been. Dr. Stillingfleet's large treatise to prove Papists idolaters, and many other books and sermons upon the same subject, ought to be solemnly condemned, and the people made sensible that a Church free from fundamental errors cannot be an idolatrous Church; that the true worship of God, which is owned to be in the Church of Rome, is as opposite to idolatry as Christ is to Belial, or light to darkness; in a word, that, since Protestants cannot deny but that the members of the Roman Catholic Church may be orthodox, and live and die well, and obtain salvation, it is inconsistent with all sense and reason, to charge them with a crime which, being a violation of the very first commandment of the decalogue, must unavoidably make them forfeit their titles to the kingdom of God. This is the reparation they are bound in conscience to make to the Church of Rome. Nor can they refuse to do it, without resolving to continue, not only in a deadly sin, but the grossest contradiction to themselves.

But what should make Protestants who neither want wit nor learning become guilty of so palpable a contradiction as suffices to startle any thinking man, in whom all sense of natural justice, truth, and honor, is not utterly extinguished? Truly, I can give no other reason for it than their being blindly persuaded of the lawfulness to blacken Papists by any methods whatsoever, whether foul or fair, just or unjust, right or wrong. Now, both the parts of the contradiction I have proved upon them are most proper to answer this honest end. Idolatry is an abominable crime; therefore Papists must be made guilty of it, for it will render them very odious. Yet salvation must not be denied them; because this

charitable opinion (the nonsense whereof will not be perceived by every body) will serve as a foil to set off the uncharitableness of Papists, who deny salvation to all that are not of their Church. I thank God, we have at least charity enough to return good for evil, and pray heartily for the salvation of those who hate and slander us in such an unchristian manner.

SECTION II.

THE FIRST PART OF THE DISTINCTION RENDERS THE FIRST REFORMERS AND THEIR RESPECTIVE CHURCHES INEXCUSABLE.

It follows, secondly, from the first part of the distinction, that both the first *reformers* were inexcusable for beginning, and that the churches established by them can give no satisfactory reasons for continuing, their separation from the Church of Rome. For how can they justify their separation from her, if she be orthodox in all fundamentals, that is, in all points necessary to salvation? The ground of this query is, because, in matters of religion, (the end whereof is the salvation of souls,) nothing is of any solid weight or moment but what has a reference to this end; which made our Savior say that "there is but one thing necessary;" and, without all dispute, salvation is this one thing. And therefore since, according to the Protestant distinction, all things necessary to salvation are to be found in the Roman Catholic Church, there can be nothing to give a just pretence to a breach of communion, and separation from her. For is it any ways justifiable to raise or maintain a schism from a Church which has all means necessary to salvation infallibly

secured to her? This cannot hold with any manner of reason, if we consider the nature of schism, how fatal its consequences are, and that even the sin of rebellion in a government is seldom attended with so great a train of evils as a schism in the Church. Now, the very greatest advocates for rebellion will scarce allow it to be justifiable in any other case than when the very constitution and fundamental laws of the kingdom are invaded. For then the sovereigns may be said to err in fundamentals. But all faults in governments, of an inferior nature, are insufficient even to give a colorable pretence to the sin of rebellion against a lawful sovereign.

Let us apply this to schism, which is a rebellion against the Church, and as heinous in its nature as that against the state, and, therefore, ought to have at least as just a pretence to color it; so that, if it were possible for the Church to err in fundamentals, it is the only case in which a schism would be justifiable; because, in any other case, the remedy is worse than the disease. And if this be so in all schisms whatsoever, that which was caused by the leaders of the *reformation*, and threw all Europe into disorder and confusion, is much less capable of being justified upon any other grounds.

Whoever is the least versed in history cannot be ignorant of the deplorable calamities, both in Church and state, to which it gave birth; as subjects revolting from their sovereigns; the empire torn to pieces by the different factions of princes, either opposing or espousing the cause of Martin Luther. The kingdom of France engaged by the Huguenots in a bloody civil war for many years; sacred places profaned; religious houses pillaged and burnt; the revenues of the Church seized by the secular power; thousands of families utterly ruined; and, in a word, all the scenes of horror and desolation which an obstinate and bloody war, carried on by parties mutually incensed, can produce,

were the fruits of this fatal schism. Nay, has it not been, even of late years, the occasion of bloodshed in several parts of Europe? And is it possible the dreadful profanations I have mentioned, and the spilling of so much Christian blood, should have no other pretence to justify it than the interest of a few speculative questions or points of religion, not at all fundamental, or in any manner necessary to salvation?

Truly, were I to have judged of the importance of the cause from its dismal effects, I should have concluded, without hesitation, that the very essentials of religion were at stake in those unhappy times; that the Church was threatened with nothing less than a total subversion; in a word, that Christianity was upon the point of being abolished, and the Alcoran just going to take place of the Bible. For then I should not have been surprised to see all Europe in a flame, and prodigal of its best blood, for the defence of so great and good a cause. But, God be praised, the Protestant distinction has prevented all such mistakes. Christianity never was in danger, the Bible is yet safe in Catholic hands, and all the fundamentals of religion stand firm. The very enemies of the Roman Catholic Church declare she has never erred in fundamentals, that is, in any point necessary to salvation. And what can they desire more? What reasonable grounds can there be for a schism? Why are the members of that Church persecuted? Why are they deprived of their birthright and the privileges of all other subjects? Why are Jews, Quakers, and Anabaptists preferred before them, since they teach nothing that is contrary to salvation? For is not eternal salvation, and all means necessary to it, sufficient to answer all the ends and purposes of religion?

But can any of the *reformed* churches promise themselves as much? There are some weighty reasons for the negative. First, they are all fallible, and may, therefore, be mistaken in their belief that they want

nothing necessary to salvation. Secondly, they have the whole body of Roman Catholics, all the world over, against them; and their judgment is not without weight. Thirdly, their very owning that salvation is attainable in the Roman Catholic Church is a strong proof of their being excluded from it. For since St. Paul has positively declared these two things, namely, that there is but "one faith," because God cannot reveal contradictories, and that "without faith it is impossible to please God," I cannot see how they who own salvation possible in the Church of Rome, (which, therefore, has the faith required by St. Paul,) can flatter themselves with the hopes of it in any other communion; since all other churches, by continuing in their schism, break that unity of faith which St. Paul requires as necessary to please God, and, by consequence, to salvation.

I am sensible I shall here be taxed with uncharitableness, in denying salvation to all churches but my own. To which I answer, 1st, that, if I believe myself to be in the true Church of Christ, I cannot do otherwise without contradicting the faith of that Church, which teaches that there is no salvation for those who keep wilfully and obstinately out of it. I answer, 2dly, that I can never think it an uncharitable office to admonish persons of the danger in which I conceive they are, though I should really be mistaken in my judgment of the matter. But I own sincerely that I cannot make it a point of honor to pretend to be more charitable than the holy fathers were in the primitive ages, who agreed unanimously in declaring all those to be in the state of damnation who separated themselves from their Church; and I dare say, with the greatest assurance, they were all in communion with the see of Rome. I shall choose a few passages out of many.

N. B. That most of the fathers I shall quote wrote against heretics who denied none of those articles which Protestants call fundamental.

St. Irenæus (L. 4, adv. Hær. c. 62) writes thus:

"God will judge those who make schisms; who are abominable, void of the love of God, and having more concern for their own convenience than for the unity of the Church, who, for inconsiderable reasons, divide and break asunder the great and glorious body of Christ, and endeavor, as much as in them lies, to ruin it utterly; having peace in their mouths, but working nothing but destruction; truly straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel. For whatever evils they design to redress, it will be much less than the evil of schism."

St. Cyprian, de Unit. Eccl. "Whosoever," says he, "leaving the Church, cleaves to an adulteress, is cut off from the promises of the Church. He that falls from the Church of Christ shall never come to the rewards of Christ. He is an alien, he is a profane person, he is an enemy. He cannot have God for his father who has not the Church for his mother. If it were possible for any to escape that was not in the ark of Noah, it shall likewise be possible for him to escape who is not in the Church."

Idem, infra. "What peace can the enemies of their brethren promise themselves? What kind of sacrifices do they imagine they offer up who are in contention with the priests? Can they think that Christ is with them in their meetings, being assembled out of the unity of the Church? Such as these, though they suffer death in the confession of his name, yet is not their blood capable of washing out their stain. The unpardonable and horrid crime of schism is not to be expiated by suffering. He can be no martyr who is not in the Church. They are enemies to God who will not keep peace in the Church. Though they deliver their bodies to be burnt, or are torn to pieces by wild beasts, yet this will never be a crown of their faith, but a punishment of their treachery; nor a glorious issue of a Christian courage, but a desperate end. Such a one may be put to death, but he can never be crowned."

St. John Chrysostom, Hom. 11, in cap. 4, Epist. ad Ephesios. "This is spoken," says he, "not only to those who rule, but also to subjects who are under their government. A certain holy man spoke a thing which was very bold, and yet he spoke it. And what was it? He affirmed that this sin [of schism] 'cannot be washed away, even with the blood of martyrdom.' For tell me, for what reason do you suffer martyrdom? Is it not for the glory of Christ? And how can you, who desire to lay down your lives for Christ, in the mean time overthrow the Church for which Christ shed his blood?"

St. Aug. L. de Unit. Eccl. c. 19. "None can arrive to salvation, or life everlasting, but he that has Christ for his head. And it is impossible that any should have Christ for his head, unless he be a member of his body, the Church."

Idem, Epist. 204, ad Donat. "Being out of the pale of the Church, separated from its unity and bond of charity, thou wouldst not escape damnation, though thou shouldst be burnt alive for confessing the name of Christ."

N. B. That St. Augustine was no uncharitable man.

Idem, L. 2, contra Epist. Parm. c. 11. "We produce these instructions from Holy Writ, that it may evidently appear that there is no wickedness can compare with the sacrilege of schism, because there is no just necessity for separation."

St. Fulgentius ad Petrum Diaconum, c. 39. "Believe steadfastly," says he, "and doubt not at all, but that every man who is a heretic, or schismatic, baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, if he be not in the unity of the Catholic Church, though he gives ever so much alms, and lose his life for the name of Christ, yet he cannot be saved. For neither baptism, nor liberal alms, nor death itself for the profession of Christ, can avail a man

any thing in order to salvation, if he does not hold the unity of the Catholic Church."

This was the language of the ancient fathers, which fully justifies the doctrine of the Church of Rome, in excluding from salvation all such as are guilty of heresy or schism. For it is a plain case that it was their judgment that, though a man be a Christian by baptism and the belief of Christ, — nay, though he suffers death for professing Christ, — yet he cannot escape eternal damnation, if he be separated from the unity of the Catholic Church.

What an authentic condemnation is this of Luther and Calvin, and other leaders of the pretended reformation, and, indeed, of all the *reformed* churches; which, though they are Christian churches by their due administration of baptism, and their belief of the incarnation, death, resurrection, and divinity of Jesus Christ, yet (if the judgment of the ancient Church be of any weight) are incapable of salvation, in being separated from their mother Church, from which they all went forth, just as those heretics and schismatics did, against whom the fathers, quoted by me, have pronounced sentence of eternal damnation; to which those eminent saints were not prompted by heat, or passion, or uncharitableness, (whereof the Church of Rome is now accused for adhering to their doctrine,) but merely by the force of truth, and an ardent zeal for retrieving those prodigals who had quitted their father's house, and saving from perdition the sheep that were gone astray.

If any one objects, that the Church of Rome is alone accountable for the separation, as being the cause of it, by excommunicating the *reformed* churches, — if any one, I say, objects this by way of jest, (for I presume no man of sense can do it seriously,) I answer him, however, first, that the Arians, and all other heretics that ever were in the world, have the same plea. The Arminians have it against the Church of Holland, and

the Socinians against the Church of England. For the fourth canon of the national synod, under King Charles I. (anno 1640,) orders that any one who is accused of Socinianism, unless he will absolutely and in terms abjure it, be excommunicated.

I answer, secondly, that the sentence of excommunication pronounced by the Church of Rome presupposed the schism, and was the punishment, but not the cause, of it; as a bill of attainder against rebellious subjects (which is a kind of lay excommunication) is not the cause of rebellion, but a just punishment of it.

Lastly, I answer him in the words of an ingenious Protestant, who, in his apology for the non-juring clergy, in answer to Dr. Sharpe, late archbishop of York, by whom they were accused of schism, writes thus: "You," says he, "have separated from them, and not they from you. For they are just where they were when you left them, and have not budged a foot from their Church. You cannot say they have broken from you, unless you will affirm that, when a ship breaks from the shore where she lay at anchor, the shore removes from her, and not she from the shore."

This represents exactly the case between the Church of Rome and the *reformed* churches; and, particularly, between the Roman Catholics (though now contemptible in their number) and the Protestants in Great Britain. The Roman Catholics are just where the Protestants left them, and have not budged a foot from their Church. Their faith and religion is the very same as it was, not only when the *reformation* began, but for nine hundred years before it was ever thought of; that is, ever since England's conversion. And Protestants can no more say that Roman Catholics have broken from them than they will affirm "that, when a ship breaks from the shore where she lay at anchor, the shore removes from her, and not she from the shore." And who, then, are the authors of the schism? Who are accountable to God for the damna-

tion of so many souls? But this is too much in answer to so weak an objection. I shall now proceed to examine the second part of the distinction.

SECTION III.

THE SECOND PART OF THE DISTINCTION CONTRADICTS THE WORD OF GOD.

The second part of the distinction denies the Church to be infallible in points that are not fundamental. This I shall prove to be a contradiction to the Word of God. First, it is inconsistent with our Savior's promise that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" because the gates of hell would prevail effectually against the Church, if she should ever fall into any heresy, let that heresy be what it will.

It is true, some heresies strike more directly at the root of Christianity than others, and those may be called fundamental heresies. But every heresy, whether it be fundamental or not, destroys all divine faith; so that, if the Church should teach any one point of doctrine contrary to the revealed Word of God, (which I call heresy,) she would lose all faith, she would be no longer the Church of Christ, but the school of Satan, and the gates of hell would prevail against her. For the devil is certainly the "father of lies," and much more of heresy, which is the worst of lies, because it gives the lie to the revealed Word of God. And would not, then, the devil prevail against the Church if he made her become the mother of lies, and even of such lies as are a contradiction to God's own word? I think the matter will bear no manner of dispute.

Nor is it any thing to the purpose whether the lie be

in a matter, or relating to an object, that is fundamental, or not; because, whatever its immediate object be, the whole theological virtue of faith is as much destroyed by it as the whole theological virtue of charity is destroyed by any one mortal sin.

To pursue this comparison, which will help to set the matter in a clear and easy light, we may say that faith is to the Church what charity is to the soul, and heresy is just as opposite to faith as mortal sin is to charity. Now, though blasphemy, for example, be a more grievous sin than calumny, yet charity is lost, and the soul receives a mortal wound, by the one as well as the other. In like manner, therefore, though a fundamental heresy, as the denying the divinity of Christ, be more impious, with reference to its immediate object, than one that is not fundamental, yet the one, as well as the other, gives a mortal wound to faith; and, by consequence, if the Church should teach any such heresy, she would be without faith, and the gates of hell would prevail against her, though the immediate object of that heresy were not relating to any matter of importance, or in itself necessary to salvation.

The principle whereon this doctrine is founded is, because divine faith is grounded upon revelation, and not upon the importance of its immediate object, or, as the belief of that truth is of itself a means necessary to salvation. As, for instance, it is not a fundamental point, whether Balaam's ass spoke or not, or whether Sampson killed a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass or with the jaw-bone of a horse. Mankind, without all dispute, might have been saved, though these two scriptural events had never happened. Yet if I should presume to deny or dispute either of them, I should be a rank heretic for my pains; because, by so doing, I should call in question the whole authority of the Bible, which, if it can lie in any one point, may do so in all the rest; and so the whole law and prophets would be rendered precarious. Nay, I should lose all

divine faith, though I believed every thing else; because faith is not barely a belief of things revealed, but the principal motive of our belief of them must be precisely, because they are revealed. And, therefore, if I deny or question any one revealed point, though ever so inconsiderable in itself, I believe nothing upon the motive of divine revelation; and, by consequence, my whole faith is destroyed.

Whence it plainly follows that, if the Church should err in any one single point of faith, whether it be fundamental as to its object or not, she would lose all divine faith; and a Church without divine faith is no longer the Church of Christ. She is no longer that virgin Church, without spot or blemish, which Christ espoused to himself forever, but becomes an adulteress, and is delivered up to the power of Satan; which is a contradiction to what our Savior has positively promised.

Secondly. It is no less a contradiction to his promise that "the Holy Ghost shall teach his Church all things;" because this promise is not only without limitation, but is a full answer to any distinction that puts a limitation upon it. For the word "all" is comprehensive and universal, including every revealed truth that comes within the determination of the Church; and to restrain it is to offer violence to the sense it naturally imports.

Thirdly. It is a contradiction to St. Paul saying that the Church "is the pillar and ground of truth;" because a church guilty of errors opposite to any revealed truths whatever, whether fundamental or non-fundamental, cannot be called "the pillar and ground of truth," without violently wresting words from their obvious and natural signification.

Fourthly. Neither can it easily be reconciled with these words of St. Paul to the Ephesians, (c. iv. 11, 14:) "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers . . . . that we be no more like children tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine;" for who

sees not that this end designed by Christ is, in a manner, frustrated by limiting the Church's infallibility to fundamentals only? Because the number of these being wholly precarious, (as I shall show hereafter,) if there be no infallible Church to fix our belief in reference to all revealed truths whatsoever, we shall still be children in faith, and "every wind of doctrine" will suffice to toss us from one belief to another.

This appears plainly in the numberless divisions and diversity of opinions in the *reformed* churches; not any two of them agreeing in the same system of religion. And it is morally impossible men should agree, when every one is encouraged, by the practice of the very founders of his church, to make his own private judgment the rule and standard of his faith, and no unerring judge is allowed of, to appeal to in doubtful cases.

It is true, any church may, by the severity of laws and censures, oblige men to a respectful silence; but this will never deliver them from doubts and uncertainties, nor fix their faith upon a solid basis. Their tongues and pens may acquiesce, but their judgment will still revolt. Their private reasons will stand good and keep their full force. Nay, what seems reason to-day will perhaps seem otherwise to-morrow; and thus will they always be wavering, "like children tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine;" whereas, if an infallible judge be acknowledged, whenever that judge pronounces sentence all doubts immediately vanish. The judgment is immovably fixed, and every private understanding "captivated unto the obedience of faith."

And this is the true reason of that perfect harmony in all matters of faith among the members of the Roman Catholic Church. For though they be allowed to dispute, *pro* and *con*, about questions not determined by the Church, (which some will needs miscall divisions amongst them,) yet, when the Church declares herself positively upon any point, there is no appeal from her to any pri-

vate judgment; but every one is bound by the principles of his religion to submit to her decisions. So that all the members of this Church, even in the most distant parts of the world, nay, though differing in every thing else, as interest, humors, customs, discipline, and language, yet agree perfectly in all points of faith. Because they have but one unerring guide to follow, which is the Church, directed, according to Christ's promise, by the Spirit of truth.

SECTION IV.

IT GIVES THE LIE TO THE NICENE CREED.

The antiquity and authority of the Nicene Creed is owned by all; and it being, next after the Apostles' Creed, the shortest summary of Christian religion, I question not but Protestants will easily grant that all its articles are fundamental. I should, therefore, be glad to know what they think or mean when they pronounce this article, "I believe One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." I presume the true meaning of it is, that Christ has a Church on earth, which is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

This, then, is an article of the Christian faith; and since articles of faith are unchangeable, it has always been, and will always continue to be, One. For if it should ever cease to be true that Christ has such a Church on earth, whoever should then pronounce that article of the Nicene Creed, instead of professing an article of faith, would make profession of a downright falsehood: which being absurd in itself, it is manifest that the Church described in the Nicene Creed can never cease to have a being upon earth.

Whence I argue thus: The Church described in the Nicene Creed will have a being as long as the world lasts. But if she should at any time become guilty of any errors whatsoever against the revealed Word of God, she would then cease to have a being; therefore the Church described in the Nicene Creed (which is undoubtedly the Church of Christ) can never become guilty of any such errors.

That she would then cease to have a being, I prove thus: Because she would then neither be One, nor Holy, nor Catholic, nor Apostolic.

First. She would not be One; because there can be no unity of faith where there is no faith at all. Now, the Church loses her whole faith by any one error against the revealed Word of God, as I have already shown. Therefore, if she should ever become guilty of any such error, her unity of faith must, of consequence, be destroyed by it.

I prove, again, that heresy and unity of faith are inconsistent; because heresy is the natural product of private judgment, and private judgment is a constant source and principle of division. The reason whereof is manifest; because men differ not only from one another in their private judgment, — nay, it is morally impossible it should be otherwise, — but are frequently inconsistent even with themselves; so that as often as they see things in a different light, they are apt to change their belief accordingly. Hence it is that no heresy ever came into the world but various sects spawned from it soon after; and a dunghill is not more fruitful in breeding vermin than private judgment, and Scripture corrupted by it, are in producing sects. It is, therefore, morally impossible that a Church corrupted with any heresy should be One.

Secondly. She would also cease to be Holy; because this title cannot belong to a Church adulterated in her doctrinè, and void of faith.

Thirdly. She would not be Catholic; because she

would want universality of time. For, since truth is more ancient than error, the former would have had a priority of time before the latter. In a word, she is called Catholic because her faith is Catholic; and no errors can be the objects of Catholic faith, nor have I ever heard of Catholic heresies in my whole life.

Lastly. She would not be Apostolic, any more than the schismatical churches of the Donatists, Novatians, and other heretics, who never erred in fundamentals. But why may not their churches be called Apostolic? Because the apostles never taught errors of any kind whatever, whether fundamental or non-fundamental. And therefore, if the doctrine of the Church of Christ were at any time of this linsey-woolsey texture, made up of fundamental truths and non-fundamental lies, it would cease to be a doctrine derived from the apostles; and a Church cannot be called Apostolic, unless she has the whole body of her doctrine from them.

Hence it plainly follows, that the second part of the distinction utterly overthrows the forementioned article of the Nicene Creed. And if one article can ever prove false, we may give up the rest, for company's sake, and the Apostles' Creed into the bargain.

Again, I argue thus: The Church of Christ on earth has either always been One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, or not. If not, then those who said the Nicene Creed, whilst there was no such Church, professed that they believed a thing which was false. But if Christ always had such a Church, then I must be so free as to tell the *reformed* gentlemen that a Church which we believe and profess to be One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, in her doctrine, is proof against any Protestant distinction; and to reform the faith of such a Church is the same bold attempt, and as unwarrantable, as to reform the creed itself.

I shall conclude this section with observing how unlucky our adversaries are in their favorite distinction, since in the first part of it they contradict themselves,

and in the second they give the lie to the Word of God, and the Nicene Creed. But something was to be said to throw dust before the eyes of ignorant people. The promises of Christ were positive and clear against them. If they denied all, the matter would have an ill appearance. If they granted all, the *reformation* was utterly overthrown. The best way, therefore, in so difficult a case, was to split and divide. A distinction in disputes makes a handsome figure, and a show at least of saying something, though nothing to the purpose. But their well-affected brethren would not perceive this. And, therefore, it was better to do so than be silent and give up all, when all was at stake. But I have still something more to say to the second part of the distinction.

SECTION V.

IT DESTROYS ALL CERTAINTY IN MATTERS OF FAITH.

If the Church can err in points that are not fundamental, we can have no certainty of the truth of any articles but such as have their evidence from human reason; and so we shall all be in a fair way of turning Deists; because every man will be furnished with a plausible pretence to question the decisions of the Church in any point that has ever been disputed. For he needs but maintain stiffly that the matter in question is not fundamental, and this will be a sufficient warrant to believe or disbelieve it, according as his own private reason shall direct him.

Thus an Arian will say that the consubstantiality of the Son is no fundamental point, and that the Church has erred in it; a Socinian will say the same of his

divinity, and a Nestorian of the unity of his person; and an anti-Trinitarian is so far from yielding that the belief of the adorable Trinity is necessary to salvation, that he regards it as a mere chimera; nay, Deists maintain that the belief of a God is the only fundamental point of religion.

How, then, shall we know what points are fundamental, and what not? Can Protestants fix any sure mark or rule to know a fundamental by, and distinguish it from such as are not fundamental? Have the *reformed* churches ever agreed about their number of fundamentals? But how is it possible they should? Since, when they argue against Papists, they all disown an infallible judge to determine the matter, and a fallible one may be mistaken in his calculation, and either obtrude that for a fundamental which is not so, or reject one that really is so; and so he may either overshoot his mark, or fall short of it. Besides, there never will be wanting some of those who will copy after the pattern set before them by the two great patriarchs of the *reformation*, and appeal from any judge to their own darling private reason.

If they say that all fundamentals are contained in the three creeds, I answer, first, that then this article, "I believe One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church," is by consequence a fundamental; which is like to do Protestants but little service, as I have already shown. I answer, secondly, that there is no mention in the creeds either of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, or of episcopacy being of divine institution, or of the revelation of Scriptures; all which may, therefore, be mere impositions, for aught we know. But whether they be in the number of fundamentals or not, I am sure they are articles of great importance.

If they answer that these, and all fundamentals, are clearly expressed in Scripture, I answer, first, that the Scriptures are no less clear in numberless points which are not fundamental; and by what rule, then, shall we

discern the one from the other? For the Scriptures do not tell us whether they are fundamental truths, or not. I answer, secondly, that the Arians, reading Scripture with Arian spectacles, found their own doctrine clearly expressed in Christ's own words; because the Scriptures, when interpreted by private judgment, are usually made a mere nose of wax, which may be turned and set what way any man pleases. The rankest heretic that ever was upon the face of the earth never wanted clear Scripture, as he pretended, to support his cause. Nay, the devil himself, when he tempted Christ, had Scripture ready to color his wicked suggestion. But it was Scripture interpreted by the spirit of lies; as it always is when private judgment sets up for an interpreter of it against the sense and authority of the Church.

I presume no man will say that the Thirty-nine Articles, though they may properly be called the Church of England's creed, contain nothing but fundamentals. For, besides that many of them are mere negatives, or contradictories to the pretended Popish errors, which, according to the distinction, are no fundamental points, there are some others which only regard discipline, and, the discipline of all churches being changeable, according to the 34th article, can never come up to the nature of a fundamental; and, by consequence, the Thirty-nine Articles determine not their number, but leave us in an entire uncertainty of it. Now, if we have no certain rule to know fundamentals by, it follows that there is scarce any point of faith the truth whereof may not be questioned; because we may doubt whether it be fundamental, and, if it be not, the Church may err in it, according to the second part of the distinction, which renders all faith and religion precarious.

Hence it is that rejecting first, and then limiting, the Church's authority in deciding controversies of religion, has opened the way to the most impious and blasphemous heresies; and there is scarce any thing so

sacred in religion but has been, and is to this day, questioned by some of those who have been brought up in the principles of the *reformation*. For, when the Church is made cheap, and her authority precarious, what wonder is it that (the very best and strongest fence of religion being broken down) men should run loose into the most extravagant opinions? For what principle can a man have after that, to fix his belief of any mystery, but his own private reason? And, since the very sublimest mysteries of the Christian religion appear the most repugnant to human reason, when a person has once imbibed this principle, and settles it as a rule and maxim to govern his faith by, viz., that there is no Church on earth, not even the Church established by Christ, but may deceive him, he will never stand to examine whether the points in question be fundamental or not, but whether they be consonant to reason and good sense; and if they appear otherwise, he will conclude that the Church may err in them, as well as any other. Nay, more probably in them; because he cannot persuade himself that God should ever reveal that for a divine truth, which, perhaps, in his notion is rank nonsense; as that the eternal and immortal God should become a mortal man, which is a scandal to Jews and a folly to Gentiles; or that three divine persons, really distinct, should be but one God, which seems as impossible to him, as that Peter, Paul, and John, should be but one man, or that two and one should not make three.

Hence it is that the nation swarms with Socinians, anti-Trinitarians, and those who style themselves freethinkers, which is now become a modish sect. And what wonder is it? For the sect of freethinkers, though of a later date as to its name than the other sects that have spawned from the *reformation*, is but the natural fruit of it. Nay, no man can pretend to set up for a *reformer* of religion unless he be first an adept in the liberal science of freethinking; that is, unless

he sets up his own private judgment against the Church which he intends to reform.

It was thus the first great *reformation* of Arius began. In the same manner Nestorius, Eutyches, Pelagius, Donatus, Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, and the whole college of reforming apostles, commenced freethinkers, by refusing to submit their private judgment to their mother church, in order to become *reformers* of it. In a word, the only difference between the modern freethinkers, as they make a separate sect, and the other forementioned *reformers*, is, that freethinkers are for a thorough *reformation* all at once, without giving quarter even to fundamentals, and so reform by wholesale what others have only reformed by retail. So that I really see not how a member of any of the *reformed* churches can fairly undertake to confute a freethinker, upon *reformation* principles, or without exposing his own weak side.

Suppose a member of the Church of England should tell a freethinker that he is bound to submit his private judgment to that Church. He would certainly answer him that, by the same rule, Luther and Calvin ought to have submitted to the Church of Rome, and then the great work of the *reformation* would never have been heartily carried on.

If he should tell him, again, that there is a great difference between the *virgin* Church of England and the *corrupt* Church of Rome, the freethinker would be apt to put this puzzling question to him, viz., whether, in the beginning of the *reformation*, there was any thing to make good this charge against the Church of Rome but the private judgment of the freethinking Martin Luther. For Luther for a long time stood alone, as Bishop Tillotson assures us, and as we shall see more at large hereafter.

Lastly. If the Protestant should tell him that a man by himself is more likely to err, and go astray, than a whole church, — because thousands can see more

than one, — and that, therefore, he ought in reason to submit to the Church established by law, the freethinker would readily answer him, that this is establishing a very dangerous Popish principle, and building the authority of a particular *reformed* church upon the ruins of the whole *reformation*. For, according to this principle, Luther, Calvin, and the other *reformers*, were wholly in the wrong in trusting to their own private judgment preferably to that of the whole Church then in being.

If the Protestant replies that their private judgment was grounded on the Word of God, the freethinker will readily answer that he desires no more, provided he be but allowed to be himself (as Luther and Calvin were) the interpreter of God's Word. For, in reality, whoever appeals from the Church to the written Word of God appeals effectually to his own private judgment; because he makes that the sole interpreter of it.

He will also answer him that numbers in religion, unless there be something else to support it, is no conclusive argument for the truth. For, if it were, he ought to turn Papist rather than Protestant; since, if the matter were to be decided by polling, the Papists would carry it against all the Protestants in Europe, much more against the Church of England taken singly.

Thus will the freethinker stand his ground against any *reformed* church, and, upon *reformation* principles, maintain the doctrine of freethinking. But, surely, none of the *reformed* churches can have the confidence to write seriously against freethinking, or be hearty enemies to it, since they all owe to it their very birth and being.

Was not freethinking the very mother and nurse of the *reformation?* For, if Luther, and Calvin, and others, who reformed their *reformation*, had not been stanch freethinkers, they would certainly have submitted to the Church whereof they were all members for many years; and then *reforming* would never have come

into fashion. But they thought their mother church was grown old and blind, and therefore would not trust her any further than they could see with their own eyes. So they all set themselves to think freely. One thought one way, another thought another way. For they all differed in their way of thinking, and each one thought himself as able a freethinker, and as capable of modelling a Church, as any of the rest; which, at length, produced the different *reformed* churches of Lutherans, Calvinists, Independents, Brownists, Arminians, Anabaptists, Quakers, and the like. And is it then a wonder that churches which have received their beginning from, and owe their whole creation and existence to, freethinking, should at all times produce some members who, being men of wit and learning, should claim the first privilege to themselves, and think as freely as their forefathers? The thing cannot naturally be otherwise. For since the founders of their churches have set them the example, why should not they follow it? Why should not Toland, Clark, and Whiston, and the author of the Discourse of Freethinking, turn *reformers*, as well as Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, &c.? Papists alone can claim no right to freethinking in matters of religion; because, believing their Church to be infallible in her decisions, according to the promises of Christ, they are bound to submit to her without limitation or reserve in every thing she teaches; which, indeed, is the only thing upon earth that can maintain unity of faith, take away all uncertainty in matters of religion, and keep men from "being like children tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine."

SECTION VI.

IT RENDERS ALL CHURCH AUTHORITY PRECARIOUS.

This is a natural consequence from what has been said already; but I shall further prove it from the 20th Protestant article of religion, where we find the following clause: "The Church has authority in controversies of faith; and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written; neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to the other."

It seems, then, that "the Church has authority in controversies of faith." But what sort of authority do the compilers of the Articles allow her? Are her children bound to submit to it, or not? If not, then her authority stands for a mere cipher but if they are, then the compilers, and all their Protestant predecessors and brethren, were inexcusable in not submitting to the Church of Rome.

Again, has she authority in all controversies, or only in some? If in all, then the distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals must be dropped; unless the compilers can make it appear that the Church of England has a special charter from Christ to require submission even to articles that are not fundamental, which, however, they pretend the Church of Rome never had. But if she has authority only in some controversies, — such, I presume, as regard fundamentals, — then her authority is as precarious as the number of her fundamentals, and every article may be disputed with her.

But the latter part of the article explains, or rather kicks down, the whole extent of her authority. "The Church has authority . . . . and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's

Word written; neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to the other."

Here, then, it is supposed that the Church is capable, 1st, of ordaining things contrary to the Word of God; 2dly, of expounding one place of Scripture so as to make it be repugnant, or a contradiction, to another; for whoever puts in a caveat against any thing supposes the thing to be possible; otherwise it would be like making a law to forbid men to fly, or walk upon their heads. But who is here to be the judge, to determine when the Church commits any such blunder? I presume she will not give verdict against herself. Every private man, then, may erect himself into a judge of the doctrine of his mother church, for he is here furnished with fair pretences for it; and it is, in effect, what Luther and Calvin did when they pretended to reform the Church of Rome.

What a large and noble field is here again laid open for the freethinker to exert himself in and triumph over the Church! What! is she, then, capable even of such gross absurdities as, by a contradictory interpretation of Scripture, to make "one part of it be repugnant to another"? If this be true, what must become of faith and religion? Must not freethinking break in upon us like an irresistible torrent, when the Church, whose wisdom and authority in interpreting Scriptures should be the main bulwark against it, is supposed, even by her own teachers, not to be wholly incapable of imposing contradictions on her children, instead of revealed truths? If a private man be convicted of contradicting himself, he becomes contemptible by it. And what idea must we then have of a Church whose judgment is represented to us as capable of a weakness that would sink the reputation even of a private person? Surely, Christ never meant to establish such a Church as this when he made her the solemn promise that "he would be with her all days, even to the consummation of the

world," and designed her to be our guide to heaven, and lead men to salvation.

But the compilers of the article considered wisely that they were then settling the authority of a church which was yet in her leading-strings; for she had broke loose from her mother Church but a few years before, and, to justify that separation, it was necessary to give a broad hint that her mother had prevaricated, by "ordaining things contrary to the Word of God," and "expounding it so as to make it repugnant to itself." For when a daughter runs away from her own mother, they who espouse the daughter's cause cannot do less than give some plausible reasons for such an extraordinary conduct, which is irregular in itself, and, at the same time, precaution her against the failings which they lay to the mother's charge. This obliged the compilers to cramp the authority of their infant church, at the very time when they could not avoid making a decent mention of it.

In effect, it is impossible for the advocates of any *reformed* church to plead for church authority without speaking incoherently and boxing themselves. For if they allow a coactive power over men's consciences, — that is, a power to oblige them both to an outward conformity and an inward submission to all her decrees, — it flies immediately in their face that they are then guilty both of heresy and schism, in not having paid that conformity and submission to the Church of Rome. But if they allow her no such power, (as the second part of the distinction is effectually inconsistent with it,) her authority becomes precarious, of course, and she holds it only by the courtesy of her own children, who may dispute it with her when the fancy takes them, just as Luther, and Calvin, and the other *reformers*, disputed it with their mother Church.

The truth of the whole matter is this. The compilers of the Thirty-nine Articles had a hard task to perform. Something was to be said, of course, concerning the

Church's authority; but it was dangerous to say too much, for fear of running insensibly into the Popish error of infallibility, which would have ruined the whole pretence of the reformation. They were, therefore, under an unhappy necessity of building with one hand and pulling down with the other; and so they first granted that "the church has authority in controversies of faith;" for to set up a church without giving her any authority at all would not have looked decent. This, therefore, had a handsome appearance. But, lest this concession should render the first *reformers* wholly inexcusable in not having submitted to that authority in their mother Church, they took care that the very next lines tacked to it should give it a mortal stab, by insinuating that the Church is not incapable of the grossest errors, both in doctrine and practice — in practice, by ordaining things contrary to the Word of God; and in doctrine, by expounding one place in Scripture so that it be repugnant to the other; which, though it was chiefly designed for an *innuendo* that the Church of Rome had been guilty of both, yet every one may, without much logic, conclude from it that the Church of England, which is directly spoken of in the article, is no less fallible than her mother Church was supposed to be; and, by consequence, if her own children should judge her guilty of errors, they have the same title to reform her as she had to *reform* the Church of Rome. For what was warrantable in her cannot be unwarrantable in them; according to the old proverb, "What is sauce for a goose is sauce for a gander." Nay, the thing has already happened; for the Presbyterians, Quakers, and Independents, who pretend to have several articles of impeachment against her, have effectually separated themselves from her communion on that score; and let any man then judge whether this does not render all church authority precarious.

But God forbid the Church of Christ should be suspected capable of such an absurdity as to make the

Word of God contradict itself. Nay, whatever church is capable of it is manifestly convicted not to be of divine extraction, but of a spurious breed. She has too much of an earthly complexion to be the beautiful spouse of Christ; neither has she the Spirit of truth, but the father of lies, for her guide. The Church of Christ is the "pillar and ground of truth," according to St. Paul. She is "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," according to the same apostle. Christ "has espoused her to himself forever." Hosea ii. And the spouse of Christ cannot be an adulteress, but is incorrupt and pure, according to St. Cyprian.

This made St. Augustine depend so entirely upon her authority that he declared, "he would not believe the Gospels themselves, unless the authority of the Church induced him to it." Contra Epist. Fund. c. 4. And since he received the Scriptures themselves barely upon her authority, it cannot be doubted but he believed she might likewise be safely trusted with the interpretation of their true sense and meaning. So that this learned and ancient father was not for precautioning his readers with suppositions that she could "ordain any thing contrary to the Word of God, or make scriptures contradict themselves." Nay, in the heat of his zeal for the Church of God, he would have called it "an abominable and accursed calumny, full of presumption and deceit, void of all truth, wisdom, and reason, idle, rash, and pernicious." Enar. 2, in Psalm 101. And therefore, to confound all such injurious suppositions, and show the entire confidence he had in his guide, he made the forementioned declaration; which though it raises the Church's authority to its highest pitch, it only places it upon its true and proper basis.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCH IN COMMUNION WITH THE SEE OF ROME HAS ALONE A JUST TITLE TO INFALLIBILITY.

I HAVE now proved the infallibility of the Church which Christ has established on earth, from the concurring testimonies of scriptures and fathers; which is all that can be required for proof of any article of religion. For how can we learn revealed truths but from the revealed Word of God, interpreted by that authority which Christ himself has established and appointed for that end? And therefore those who, in their defence of the Church's infallibility, lay a stress upon certain rational congruities, — as, that it is inconsistent with the infinite goodness of God to leave men without an infallible guide, — appear to me to take the question by the wrong handle. For the dispute between Catholics and Protestants is not whether God in his infinite goodness be bound to give us such a guide, but whether in effect he has been so merciful as to do it! Now, the revealed Word of God tells us positively he has. The promises of Christ are as clear as words can make them; and the faith of the ancient Church, grounded on those promises, is conveyed to us in the writings of the holy fathers. Upon this foundation the Church's infallibility is built — a foundation so strong and firm that, if God's Word may be relied on, it wants no arguments from congruities of human reason to support it.

Now, then, let us see where this infallible Church is to be found. The point I have undertaken to prove is,

that the Church in communion with the see of Rome has alone an unquestionable title to it. And I shall either give her this name, or call her the Roman Catholic Church, or the Church of Rome; she being so called because the bishop of Rome is her visible head, or supreme pastor. But whatever name I give her, I desire the reader to take notice that I mean not the particular diocese of Rome; for this is no more the Catholic Church than the head is the whole body, or the diocese of Canterbury the whole Church of England. This caution would appear frivolous, were it not necessary to avoid a childish equivocation much affected by Protestant writers, as will appear hereafter; for it serves to cast a mist before people's eyes, and keep the true state of the question out of sight; which does more service to a weak cause than a thousand arguments.

My first proof, that the Church in communion with the see of Rome is alone that infallible Church which Christ has established, is this, — because all the *reformed* churches frankly disown the title of "infallible." And they are very just to themselves in so doing. And as to the Greek Church, (though it be a part of her faith that "the visible Church of Christ is infallible,") she cannot pretend to it with any color of reason. It follows, then, that the Church in communion with the see of Rome is the only one that has a just claim to it.

That the Greek Church can have no pretence to it is a very plain case; because a church that has changed her faith backward and forward cannot call herself infallible. Now, the most authentic histories prove the Greek Church guilty of this change in her faith relating to the procession of the Holy Ghost, and the supremacy of the bishop of Rome; for in all other points she agrees with us, and has condemned the *reformation* in several councils. When Photius first began his schism, — being provoked to it because the pope (to whom he appealed, and thereby acknowledged him his superior) refused to confirm his ordination, as being irregular and unca-

nonical, — the Greek Church was in perfect communion with the see of Rome, and there appeared no disagreement in any article of faith between the two churches. Photius made the breach, chiefly by maintaining that "the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father alone," and the article of supremacy followed of course; because a subject cannot rebel against his sovereign without impeaching his authority. Photius, being the first patriarch of the east, drew, by degrees, the greatest part of the Greek Church into his error. After a long contest, and great endeavors used to bring her back to the ancient faith, she at length renounced her errors, and subscribed the condemnation of them in the general Council of Florence. The pope's supremacy, together with other articles, was subscribed to by all the bishops of both churches, (Mark of Ephesus alone excepted,) and so she was again united to the Church of Rome. But returning not long after to her vomit, she has ever since continued guilty both of heresy and schism; and Muscovy, which has received its Christianity from the Greeks, is in the same condition.

This is a short and faithful account of that whole business; and if Protestants can produce any authentic history to prove the like change relating to any article of faith in the Church of Rome, then I shall freely own her to be as fallible as the Greek Church, and acknowledge that there is no such thing as an infallible church on earth.

I prove it, secondly: In the beginning of the 16th century the Church of Rome was the only Christian church upon earth that could show a perpetual visibility from the time of the apostles down to that age. For the *reformed* churches began not to creep out of the shell till the year 1517; and the Greek Church (considered precisely as a schismatical church) began about the middle of the ninth century.

Now, then, the true Church of Christ was either always visible or she was invisible for several hundred

years before the 16th century. If she was always visible, and if the Church of Rome was not this true Church of Christ to which all his promises of infallibility were made, then Protestants are bound to mark out distinctly in what other external communion, or visible society of men, the true Church of Christ subsisted for the space of 1500 years before the *reformation;* which if they pretend to do, then I infer these two consequences from it: 1, that the Church of England ought to have received her ordination and mission from this true visible Church of Christ, and not from the anti-Christian and idolatrous Church of Rome, (as Protestants commonly style her,) from which, notwithstanding, the Church of England labors all she can to prove that her ordination and mission is derived; 2, that all the *reformed* churches were bound to have joined themselves to the external communion of this true visible Church of Christ, and not to have set up separate communions of their own; whereas both Luther and Calvin declared publicly (as I shall show hereafter) that they had separated themselves from the whole Christian world.

But if they say that the true Church of Christ was invisible for several hundred years, then it is manifest that none of the *reformed* churches, at their separation from the Church of Rome, joined themselves to the true Church of Christ; for I cannot well conceive how men can either receive instructions from, or join themselves to, an invisible Church. But I am still less capable of apprehending how the Church of England could receive her ordination and mission from the hands of invisible bishops and pastors. So that this ridiculous system of an invisible church overthrows the very pretence of any real ordination, mission, or hierarchy, in that church.

Hence it follows that the Church of England, at least, is obliged to own that the true Church of Christ has always been visible. And since the promises of Christ

were only made to his own true Church, I conclude, again, that they were not made to any church that ever was invisible, since the time of the apostles.

Now, all the *reformed* churches were invisible for many hundred years, as is fairly owned by Protestant authors whom I shall quote hereafter, the fact being wholly undeniable; and the Greek Church is actually guilty of heresy, even in a fundamental point, as Protestants must likewise own; the consequence, therefore, is that, if the Church of Christ be infallible, as I have proved she is, the Roman Catholic Church alone can maintain her title to it, as having been always visible, in a succession of bishops and pastors teaching one and the same faith, from the beginning of Christianity down to this very time.

I prove it, thirdly: The Church in communion with the see of Rome was the true Church of Christ when St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans, whom he styles "the beloved of God, called to be saints," and gives God thanks "for that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world," (Rom. i. 7, 8,) which he would not have done had it been tainted with any error. Now, as the see of Rome was then free from error, so it is manifest that the whole Christian church in communion with her was likewise untainted; because St. Paul says that "their faith was spoken of," that is, preached, "throughout the whole world." The consequence whereof is, that the true Church of Christ was then only visible in that society of Christians which was united in faith and communion with her supreme pastor, the bishop of Rome, who at that time was* St. Peter; for St. Paul had never been at Rome when he wrote that epistle, as appears from his own words, Rom. i. 13, and xv. 22.

Hence I argue thus: The Church in communion

* St. Peter came to Rome in the second year of the Emperor Claudius, anno Christi 42. St. Paul wrote to the Romans anno 57.

with the see of Rome was once the true Church, and is owned by most Protestants (I may say all) to have continued so for some ages. Therefore, unless it can be made out, with demonstrative evidence, that she has since forfeited her title, she must still be acknowledged the same true Church to which all the promises of infallibility were made. I say, unless it be made out with demonstrative evidence, because nothing but demonstrative and incontestable evidence can be of any weight against a Church that was ever in possession of the truth.

This was St. Austin's argument both against the Manichees and Donatists, who would needs *reform* their mother Church. But this great champion of the Catholic faith required nothing less of them than incontestable evidence for a sufficient conviction of the Church's being in an error. The Manichees labored all they could to make him once more their proselyte; but, to satisfy them that he had embraced the Catholic faith, and continued in it, upon solid grounds, he wrote thus to them: "Not to speak of the wisdom which you do not believe is in the Catholic Church, there are many other things which most justly keep me in her communion. 1. The agreement of people and nations holds me. 2. Authority begun with miracles, nourished with hope, increased with charity, confirmed by antiquity, holds me. 3. A succession of bishops, descending from the see of St. Peter, to whom Christ after his resurrection committed his flock, to the present episcopacy, holds me. 4. Lastly, the very name of Catholic holds me; of which this Church alone has, not without reason, so kept the possession, that though all heretics desire to be called Catholics, yet, if a stranger asks them where Catholics meet, none of the heretics dares point out his own house, or his own church. These, then, so many and such sacred ties of the Christian name, justly keep a man steadfast in believing the Catholic Church. But there is nothing of all this amongst you, to invite or

hold me. You promise truth, indeed, and make a great noise about it; and, if you can make it appear, with such an incontestable evidence that no man can doubt of it, all the motives that hold me in the Catholic Church must yield to it." Contra Epist. Fund. c. 4.

Here we see what St. Austin demanded of the Manichees, to prove any thing against the Catholic Church; which, in his time, was undoubtedly the Church in communion with the see of Rome; because one of the motives that kept him in it was the succession of bishops descending from the see of St. Peter to him who was then bishop of Rome when he wrote his book against the Manichees. Besides, St. Austin was himself a *massing* bishop, believed there was a purgatory, prayed for his mother's soul, implored the prayers of the saints in heaven, had a great veneration for their relics, and believed that God wrought miracles by them, whereof he has left several authentic proofs in his writings. Nay, he certainly believed the supremacy of St. Peter and his successors; for why should he else mention the succession of bishops from St. Peter's see rather than any other, as a motive that held him in the Catholic Church? all which show plainly, both that St. Austin was a stanch Papist, and that the faith of the Catholic Church in his time, which is now about thirteen hundred years ago, was downright Popery. And, indeed, it is no small comfort for Roman Catholics that, when they are now questioned about their religion, they can answer for themselves, word for word, what St. Austin says to the Manichees, which no member of any *reformed* church can do without talking nonsense.

But as he demanded unquestionable evidence of the Manichees, so he required the same of the Donatists concerning the re-baptism of persons baptized by heretics; because, the Church being in possession of a constant practice of not re-baptizing them, he thought nothing less sufficient to impeach this practice than a positive declaration, in Scripture, that persons baptized by

heretics were to be re-baptized in the Catholic Church. His words are these, (Lib. de Unit. Eccl. c. 24:) "Show," says he, "that the canonical Scriptures have openly declared that he who has been baptized among heretics in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is to be baptized in the Catholic Church . . . . We demand of you some clear evidence, which needs no interpreter." *Aliquid manifestum, quod interprete non egeat, a vobis flagitamus.*

Since, therefore, the Church in communion with the see of Rome is acknowledged to have been formerly the true Church, — that Church to which all the promises were made, — since she was in possession of her title for some ages, — nothing less than unquestionable evidence that she has since changed her faith can deprive her of it. Nay, this evidence, whether from Scripture or undeniable tradition, must be so clear, according to St. Austin, that no man can doubt of it, (*Veritas tam manifesta ut in dubium venire non possit,*) or, as Dr. Stillingfleet explains, (in his Rational Account, p. 539,) "such as, being proposed to any man, and understood, the mind cannot choose but inwardly assent to it" — which the doctor required of all those that pretended to contradict the decisions of his Church; not reflecting that the first *reformers* never could produce any such evidence against the Roman Catholic Church. For it would have been very strange indeed that, if there had been any such evidence against her, she should not have seen it for the space of above eight hundred years, in which the book of Protestant homilies allows her to have had possession of whole Christendom, before the *reformation;* and it would be no less strange that the Roman Catholics in Great Britain should not be clear-sighted enough to perceive it; or, if they saw it, that they should not yield to it, when it is so much their interest to do it, and conscience, which would then be on the same side with their interest, would oblige them to it.

I prove it, fourthly: Christ committed his whole flock to St. Peter, and made him a promise that his Church should be built upon him. Christ, then, has no other Church on earth than that which is built upon St. Peter; and to this alone the promises of a perpetual assistance were made. But no other church can be said to be built upon St. Peter than that which has St. Peter, and his successors, for its head; and this is no other than the Church in communion with the see of Rome, which was St. Peter's seat, as appears from the forementioned passage of St. Austin, and has always been the episcopal seat of his successors; therefore, that alone is Christ's infallible Church on earth, as being alone the Church to which all the promises of a perpetual assistance were made, and to which no separate communion can have any title.

I prove it, fifthly: The infallibility promised by Christ must be lodged either in the Church of Rome or in some other Church, from which the Church of Rome has separated herself; and then that Church in which it is lodged, and from whose communion the Church of Rome has separated herself, must, in all ages, have had a succession of bishops and pastors teaching a doctrine directly opposite to what is now called Popery. But no history has ever informed us of a Church, wherein there has been a perpetual succession of bishops and pastors teaching a doctrine opposite to that of the Church of Rome, and from whose communion that Church separated herself; nay, the very enemies of our Church confess that "Popery reigned universally, and without contradiction, for many hundred years," as we shall see in the following chapter; therefore, the infallible Church established by Christ can be no other than the Church of Rome; which Church alone can truly show a perpetual succession of bishops teaching the same doctrine from age to age, and from which all other churches went forth, and separated themselves. Unless any one will say that, when children run away from their father's

house, the house runs away from them. For in all the changes of religion that have ever happened, the Church of Rome has acted no other part than to keep where she was before. And so the change was in those who fell from the faith they once possessed, but not in the Church that maintained it.

I prove it, sixthly and lastly, thus: Towards the end of the 6th century, when St. Gregory sent missioners to convert England, there was only the Church in communion with the see of Rome, (which was the great body of Christians spread over most nations both of the East and West,) and some separate communions, consisting of the remains of Arians, Nestorians, Eutychians, Donatists, Pelagians, and such others, who are looked upon as heretics by Protestants themselves. These, therefore, were no part of the true Church of Christ, as being cut off from it. I ask, then, whether Christ had at that time a Church on earth or not. If not, then whosoever pronounced this article of the Nicene Creed, "I believe One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church," made profession of a falsehood; which is absurd. If he had, it was the Church then in communion with the see of Rome; and, therefore, if the Church now in communion with that see be, in her faith, the same she was in Pope Gregory's time, it follows manifestly that, as she was then, so she is now the only true, and, by consequence, infallible Church of Christ on earth.

It remains, then, only to show that her faith is the same now as it was then. For proof whereof, we have the concurring testimonies of historians, both Protestant and Catholic; who agree unanimously, that St. Austin brought that religion into England which is now called Popery. Some Protestants, indeed, are pleased to say that it was converting England from one idolatry to another; but it is no matter in what language they express it, so they own the fact. Besides, it is notoriously known to all who have but read the chronicles that England never changed its faith for nine hundred

years — that is, from its conversion to Christianity, under Pope Gregory, till the 23d year of Henry VIII., whom Bishop Tillotson styles the postilion of the *reformation*. It is, therefore, demonstration that Roman Catholics, in Great Britain, hold now the same faith, and profess the same religion, as was planted by St. Austin in England when it was first converted by him. And, by consequence, as St. Austin was then a member of the true Church of Christ, so Roman Catholics cannot but be so at present.

These, surely, are arguments enough, both for their number and strength, to prove a thing which will bear no manner of dispute, if there be an infallible Church on earth, as I hope I have proved effectually there is. So that whoever is convinced of it must be fond of losing his labor, if he goes about to seek it elsewhere than in the Roman Catholic Church. It is for this reason, all Protestant writers muster up their whole strength against this article of our faith, and, when fair arguing fails them, employ their best talents to ridicule what they cannot confute. Because, in this dispute, their all is at stake; and if this one article be proved against them, the whole *reformation* falls to the ground of course, as having nothing to support it.

I am sensible, however, I have one powerful enemy to deal with, and but one. I mean the prejudices of education; which, as they are the strongest bias upon men's judgment, so are they usually of so tenacious a nature that to reason a person out of a prepossession of a long standing, and deeply imbibed, is almost as hard a task as it would be to undertake to reason him out of his natural complexion. A Protestant, who from his tender years has been prepossessed against the Church of Rome, and scarce ever heard of her but in libels and invectives against her, will say thus to himself: "What! is it possible that a Church corrupted with so many errors as the Church of Rome has always been represented to me should be infallible in her doc-

trine? Can such good and learned men as our preachers are deceive us?" This, (though it be no more than every Jew or Mahometan may say for himself,) especially if joined with the consideration of interest, which has a very persuasive power, will suffice to frustrate the strongest and clearest proofs.

However, this shall not discourage me from doing justice to an injured Church, or endeavoring to vindicate her from the aspersions her enemies have thrown upon her to color their own apostacy and separation from her. In order to do it, I shall endeavor to convince the reader that the pretended errors laid to her charge are really and truly the ancient faith of the Church — that is, the doctrine taught by Christ and his apostles. For proof whereof, I shall demonstrate that no Church, teaching a doctrine opposite to the pretended errors of the Church of Rome, ever appeared in the world before her. For if this can be made evident, it will follow, 1st, that the pretended errors of the Church of Rome have antiquity on their side, which is one necessary mark of truth; because all truths belonging to the Christian faith, being derived from Christ himself and his apostles, must of necessity be more ancient than their opposite errors. It will follow, 2dly, that the doctrine of the *reformation* came too late into the world to be the doctrine of the apostles. By the doctrine of the *reformation*, I mean every branch of it that is opposite to what is now called Popery.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH OF ROME VINDICATED

SECTION I.

THE STATE OF RELIGION IN CHRISTENDOM BEFORE THE PRETENDED REFORMATION.

Martin Luther, an Austin friar, began his pretended reformation in the year of our Lord 1517. The Greek and Latin Churches, though they had been united in the general Council of Florence, were then again divided. Muscovy followed the fate of the Greek Church, and the Spanish West Indies were, as they are now, in the communion of the Church of Rome. The Greeks differed from the Latins only in the article relating to the procession of the Holy Ghost, as I have already observed, which, however, drew unavoidably after it that of the supremacy. In all other doctrinal points whatever, they agreed with the Church of Rome, as they do at present; for proof whereof, I refer the reader to the learned book intituled, "The Church of Christ showed by the," &c., part i, chap. 1, p. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14; where he may likewise be satisfied that the Nestorians, Armenians, Cophtes, Syrians, and Ethiopians, also reject the doctrine of the *reformation* in all points wherein it differs from the Roman Catholic Church.

As to the Latin Church, that is, the Church in com-

munion with the see of Rome, at the time when Luther set up for a *reformer*, she was spread over all the principal kingdoms of Europe. England, Scotland, Ireland, the whole empire, with the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands, the large kingdoms of France and Spain, all Italy, with the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, &c., were all united in the same faith, acknowledging the pope for their common father, the true vicar of Christ, and supreme head of their Church. So that Luther had not any in the whole world to communicate with. And was it not a presumption, even to a degree of madness, for a private monk to set up his own private judgment in opposition to all Christendom, and stand single against the whole world? Truly it would look like a dream, rather than a serious truth, were it not attested by all writers, and Luther himself.

For, in the preface to his works, he boasts that he was alone at first. *Primo solus eram.* And in his preface to the book *de abroganda Missa privata*, he writes thus: "With how many medicines, and powerful evidences of Scripture, have I scarce yet settled my conscience to be able alone to contradict the pope, and to believe him antichrist, the bishops his apostles, and the universities his stews! How oft did my heart tremble, and reprehend me by objecting their strongest and only argument — 'art thou alone wise? and do all err?'"

It seems the good man had some terrible gripes of conscience before he could work himself into a belief that the successor of St. Peter was antichrist; that all the bishops in the world were the devil's apostles, and the great nurseries of piety and learning his stews. How troublesome is it to have too tender a conscience! But Kate Boren cured him soon after of all gripes and qualms.

Calvin owns the same truth, Epist. 141. "We have been forced," says he, "to break off from the communion of the whole world." *A toto mundo discessionem*

facere coacti sumus. Nay, many Protestant writers glory in Luther's separation from the whole world "If there had been right believers," says one, "who went before Luther in his office, there had been no need of a Lutheran *reformation.*" Georgius Billius, in Aug. Conf. Art. 7, p. 137. "It is ridiculous," says another, "to think that, in the time before Luther, any had the purity of doctrine, and that Luther should receive it from them." Bened. Morgestern de Ecclesia, p. 145.

This gentleman, like a drag-net, sweeps all before him — fathers, councils, doctors; nay, I fear the apostles themselves will scarce escape.

It is, then, an incontestable truth, that Luther did not only separate himself from his one mother Church, but that there was not any preëxistent visible Church of Christians, in the whole world, into which he could incorporate himself. But how long had the Roman Catholic Church, from whose communion he separated himself, already had a being before the *reformation!* This is a point of great importance, and challenges a serious examination.

It is certain she was venerable for her antiquity even at the time when Luther took upon him to reform her. For, first, all separate Christian communions then extant in the world had either gone out immediately from her, or spawned from those that had; and some of these were very ancient, as Nestorians, Eutychians, and such others.

Secondly The first four general councils were all in communion with the bishop of Rome. The first, of Nice, against the Arians, anno 325, was in communion with Pope Sylvester, whose legates, together with Osius, presided at it.

The second, of Constantinople, against the Macedonians, anno 381, was in communion with Pope Damasus, whom the fathers of that council, in their synodical letter to him, thank for calling them to a council as his

members; and Demasus, in his answer, styles them his most honorable children.

The third, of Ephesus, against Nestorius, anno 431, was in the communion of Pope Celestin, whose legate told the council that his master was their head, and the successor of St. Peter, whose place and authority the bishop of Rome held, (Act 2, T. 3, Conc. p. 619. Act 3, p. 626;) against which not one in the council made the least exception. So that it even proves a great deal more than is necessary for my present purpose.

The fourth, of Calcedon, against Eutyches and Dioscorus, anno 451, was in communion with St. Leo, to whom the council wrote in this manner: *Rogamus igitur, et tuis decretis honora nostrum judicium; et sicut nos capite in bonis adjecimus consonantiam, sic et summitas tua filiis quod decet adhibeat.* That is, "We desire you to honor our judgment with your decrees: and as we have agreed with our head in all good things, so may your highness grant to us, your children, that which is fitting." Conc. Calced. in Epist. ad St. Leonem. Tom. 4, p. 837, D. E.

I only mention these four general councils, because they are allowed of by the church of England. Act 1, Eliz. c. ? And the time in which they were held witnesses their antiquity; for the first was held near twelve hundred years, and the last of the above a thousand and fifty years, before the *reformation.*

Whence it follows, first, that the Church in communion with the see of Rome not only had a being, (whereof no man doubts,) but was wholly incorrupt and free from errors, both from the time of the apostles to the first general council, and in the whole interval of time between that and the fourth, or last, council allowed of by the church of England. The reason is clear — because not one of the first four councils accused her of any errors; and had she been guilty of any, it cannot be doubted but those councils would have called her to an account, and condemned her, as they did

the Arians, Macedonians, Nestorians, and Eutychians. Nay, it is manifest that the faith of those councils and the see of Rome was one and the same; for otherwise they would not have been in the same communion; and, since the church of England allows of those councils, it is no less manifest that she believes their faith was orthodox.

Whence it follows, secondly, that the church of England, which owns the authority of the first four councils, must likewise acknowledge that the Roman Catholic Church, or the Church in communion with the see of Rome, was at least free from corruptions till the middle of the fifth century, in which the fourth general council was held.

Now, then, if we can but make the Popery which Luther *reformed* shake hands with the religion of those times, — that is, if it can but be clearly proved that the very same doctrine which was professed by the Church of Rome when Luther began to *reform* was likewise professed by the Catholic Church in those ancient times in which she is acknowledged to have been free from corruptions, — will it not be a demonstrative proof that the doctrine called Popery, and the Church which professes it, are as ancient as Christianity itself? The evidence will certainly be beyond all manner of dispute. Let us then make some inquiry into this important matter, and see how far the doctrine called Popery may be traced, even from the concessions of such Protestant writers as are beyond exception.

SECTION II.

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE DOCTRINE CALLED POPERY PROVED FROM PROTESTANT WRITERS.

First Bishop Tillotson, (Serm. 49, p. 588,) writes thus: "In the beginning of the reformation when an-

tichrist sat securely in the quiet possession of his kingdom, Luther arose," &c. These words, "securely," and "in the quiet possession," must be owned to be very emphatical; though I cannot draw any positive consequence from them as to the number of years which that secure and quiet possession had already lasted; but since so learned a man as the bishop was could not be ignorant of it, it is probable he foresaw the advantage we should make of it had he been too particular, and, therefore, judged it not safe to speak out, but chose rather to leave the reader in the dark than let him know more than was fitting for him.

Perkins, in his Exposition upon the Creed, (p. 400,) ventures to be a little plainer. His words are these: "We say that before the days of Luther, for the space of many hundred years, a universal apostacy overspread the whole face of the earth, and that our Church was not then visible in the world." Here Popery, which the author is pleased to call "a universal apostacy," is owned to have "overspread the whole face of the earth for many hundred years" before the days of Luther. However, he did not think it proper to specify, as he might have done, how many hundred years this universal apostacy had already lasted. But every intelligent reader will be apt to guess that, when a man says "many hundred years," he does not mean a very small number.

But the Protestant Homily Book, in order to set forth in the most pathetical manner the danger of Popery, which the composer has the charity to call "abominable idolatry," — this book, I say, (the authority whereof cannot be questioned,) has ventured to explain some part of Perkins's "many hundred years." The words are as follows: "Laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees of men, women, and children, of whole Christendom, had been at once drowned in abominable idolatry; and that for the space of eight hundred years and more." Hom. against Peril

of Idolatry, part iii. p. 251, printed, London, anno 1687.

Here, then, we have "eight hundred years," with a "more" at the end of them, allowed to Popery before the *reformation*. The word "more" may be made to signify as much, or as little, as every one pleases; but it may modestly be extended so far as to make the total number amount to about nine hundred years in all; which brings universal Popery to St. Gregory's time, who transplanted it into England, where it flourished just nine hundred years before the *reformation*. So that now we have brought it safe to the beginning of the 7th century, that is, within a hundred and fifty years of the fourth general council; and now I have only this small interval of time to provide for it, which if I can do, with the help of a good Protestant guide, it will easily find its way to the very time of the apostles.

But I have luckily met with one who even out-goes my wishes, and has conducted Popery not only to the 4th, but even beyond the 1st great general Council of Nice. The person I speak of is Mr. Napier, who, in his book upon the Revelations, (Prob. 37, p. 68,) is so sincere as to own that Popery, which he cannot forbear giving an ugly name to, reigned universally in the very beginning of the 4th century, and under the first Christian emperor that ever was in the world. But lest any one should, through mistake, think Mr. Napier to be an obscure or inconsiderable writer, Mr. Collier, in his Historical Dictionary, has taken care to publish his merits, for he styles him a "profound scholar, and of great worth."

This learned and worthy person, then, writes thus: "From the year of Christ three hundred and sixteen, the anti-Christian and Papistical reign has begun — reigning universally, and without any debatable contradiction, one thousand two hundred and sixty years." And again, (chap. 11, p. 145:) "The pope and clergy have

possessed the outward visible Church even one thousand two hundred and sixty years." I presume he counts to the time that the *reformation* was established in Great Britain.

This, however, is precise and clear, though the other three gentlemen were more or less upon the reserve. Tillotson has only favored us with a broad hint. Perkins, indeed, allows Popery many hundred years, but is careful not to let us know how many. The homilist gives it eight hundred years and more; but his "more" is like a string, that may be let out or drawn in as much as every one shall fancy. But the learned and worthy Napier speaks boldly, and may serve as a comment upon the other three. For we are certified by him that the Papistical reign began from the year of Christ three hundred and sixteen, that is, precisely a year more than twelve hundred before Luther commenced *reformer*. What pity is it that he has not specified the very day of the month on which Popery began its universal reign! For, when his hand was in, he might have done the one with as much ease as the other; and then Papists might have had the pleasure to keep the anniversary feast of its accession to the empire of the universal Christian world.

But though Mr. Napier has done Popery a considerable service, by allowing it a universal reign even in the beginning of the fourth century, yet the four Protestant annalists commonly called the Magdeburgians carry it still higher, and stick not to date their pretended "decay of the Christian doctrine," and the "straw and stubble of Papistical errors," as they call them, even from the age immediately after Christ and his apostles. Thus God has confounded the enemies of his Church, by making them become witnesses of the truth against their wills, and proclaim the antiquity of her faith in those very writings which they intended for the sharpest invectives against it.

Upon the whole, I cannot but make this observation, viz., that, if Popery had its beginning in any age since

the time of the apostles, it is morally impossible but so considerable an event must have been transmitted to posterity, I will not say by one or two historians of note, but by hundreds, who would have marked out the time when it happened with such an unquestionable certainty that it would have been impossible either to doubt of it or differ in opinions about it. Thus we know exactly the very year when Arianism and Lutheranism began. The facts were never questioned by any man in the world; and the certainty of them leaves no room for any diversity of opinions about them.

If, then, there were any ancient records, or authentic history, that fixed precisely the time when Popery began, would not all Protestants have quoted them for the chronology of a fact which must have sunk the credit of the Church of Rome to all intents and purposes, and established the *reformed* churches upon the most solid foundation? It is very sure they never would have overlooked an advantage of that importance; nay, every man of learning would have had it without book; and the date of every branch of Popery would have been as well known as that of the *reformation;* concerning which, there never were two opinions among thousands that have written of it.

Since, therefore, instead of this unanimous agreement in fixing the time that Popery began, we find nothing but cutting and shuffling, precarious guesses, and diversity of opinion, among the very best Protestant writers, it is a demonstrative proof that they have no ancient or authentic records concerning any beginning of it since the time of the apostles. And we may justly conclude that, as it reigned universally for many hundred years before the *reformation* according to Perkins, for eight hundred years and more according to the Book of Homilies, for above twelve hundred years according to Mr. Napier, and is owned by the Magdeburgians to have had a being even in the second century, — we may conclude, I say, that it never

had any other beginning than that of Christianity, viz., from Christ himself and his apostles. But this argument shall be treated at large hereafter.

I observe, secondly, that the old childish whim, of introducing Popery in the monkish ages (as Protestants style them) of pretended ignorance and darkness, is quite thrown out of doors both by the homilist and Mr. Napier. For, in the beginning of the 4th century there were no monks at all, as Protestants understand the word, and, though there were several monasteries of them in the beginning of the 7th, yet what Protestants call monkish ages are of a much later date; and so the pretended ignorance and darkness of those ages could not favor the introduction of Popery, which, according to the Book of Homilies, was fully established long before. This shall likewise be fully handled in chap. 5.

But, to return once more to the learned Mr. Napier, whose chronology relating to the grand epoch of Popery is very curious, we see he fixes it precisely in the year of Christ 316, that is, nine years before the first great general Council of Nice, which was held anno 325. Nay, he tells us expressly that even then it reigned universally; so that it may be truly said, in Bishop Tillotson's language, that even then "antichrist sat securely in the quiet possession of his kingdom." Very strange!—unless we had some information how he got into it. For a kingdom of so vast an extent as the whole Christian world is not usually got in hugger-mugger, or, like a purse, by stealth.

However that may be, it follows evidently, from Mr. Napier's chronology, that the fathers of the Nicene Council, though allowed of and respected by Protestants themselves, were all stanch Papists. And, what is very remarkable, many of the bishops of that council were eminent saints, and carried about them the glorious marks of their past sufferings for the faith of Christ.

I ask, then, whether the bishops of the Nicene Council had been Papists from their infancy, or not. If so, then, without all dispute, they had been brought up by Papists; and so Popery is still more ancient than Mr. Napier makes it. But, if they had not been Papists from their infancy, then they were all infamous apostates, St. Athanasius among the rest. And is it not very strange that not one of them should be touched with remorse, nor represent to the council their fall from the ancient religion, nor exhort them to a *reformation;* especially, when the supposed change from one religion to another was of so fresh a date that there was not a bishop in the council but must have been concerned in it?

But it is still more wonderful that the Arians, their mortal enemies, who were admitted to, and heard in, the council, should not reproach them with their apostacy, and so put them to open shame. And yet the acts and histories of that council mention no such thing. Nay, Eusebius himself, who was present at it, and has written the history of the Church down to this time, knew nothing of any universal apostacy from the primitive faith of the Church to Popery. For, had he known it, it is incredible he would have passed it over in silence. And, therefore, since neither he nor those that wrote immediately after him have left us any history, record, or monument, of any change in the faith of the universal visible Church introduced before their time, it is manifest there never was any such change; and, by consequence, the Popery which Mr. Napier owns to have reigned universally even nine years before the Council of Nice was the very religion that had been handed down to them from the apostles themselves.

But I shall now set aside these testimonies of Protestant writers, which witness the antiquity of the Roman Catholic faith, and endeavor to take a more effectual way to prove it, without being at the courtesy of any Protestant evidence to vouch for it. But, (to avoid an unnecessary multiplicity of words,) as all the pretended

errors of the Church of Rome are briefly expressed by the word Popery, so the doctrine of the *reformation*, as it is directly opposite to it, shall, for brevity's sake, be called Protestancy. Because I shall have occasion to repeat them both frequently, and it is no matter what names we give them, so we but understand one another.

Now the whole question is, whether the doctrine called Protestancy, or that which is called Popery, has a fairer title to antiquity. If Protestancy be the true Christian doctrine which was taught by the apostles, it must have had a being in the world preëxistent to that of Popery; and then there must have happened a "total change from Protestancy to Popery," in some age or other, since the time of the apostles. For, without this change, Popery could not have got possession of the universal visible Church, as it certainly had, at the beginning of the *reformation*, when the courageous Martin Luther stood alone against the whole Christian world.

It shall, therefore, be my task to demonstrate that there never happened any such change, or, which amounts to the same, that no church teaching a doctrine opposite to the pretended errors of the Church of Rome ever appeared in the world before her: which if it be made evident, the consequence will be, that the doctrine called Popery is as ancient as Christianity itself, and has been handed down to us from Christ and his apostles.

But it is very necessary the reader should here observe that Popery in general may be divided into two parts, viz., the discipline and the faith of the Church of Rome. The proper objects of faith are all revealed truths, which are the same in all ages; nor can any authority upon earth pretend to make the least change in them. But the discipline of the Church, being not of divine revelation, but human institution, is doubtless changeable; because the same legislative power which

can make laws and regulations for the public good may likewise, for just reasons, alter, suspend, or repeal, the laws or regulations it has made.

Thus the ancient penitential canons, though they were in force for some ages, have not been binding for many hundred years past. Thus, likewise, the Council of Trent regulated the prohibited degrees of consanguinity and affinity otherwise than they were before. Nay, even the apostolical constitution of the Council of Jerusalem, which forbids blood and things strangled, (Acts xv. 29,) remained not long in force, but, as the motive ceased, the obligation became void of course. For, let laws be ever so good in themselves, they are not good at all times, nor in all places.

Now, then, when I pretend to prove "that the doctrine called Popery is as ancient as Christianity," I mean not the discipline, but the faith, of the Church of Rome. For it is absurd to maintain that regulations of discipline, which came gradually into the Church and have been subject to variations, are as ancient as the Church itself.

It is, however, a common practice, though a very unfair one, among Protestant writers, when they design to charge the Church of Rome with novelty, to confound the one with the other, and exemplify promiscuously in points of faith or discipline, as if they were upon the same footing; whereas, to say any thing to the purpose against that Church, they must prove precisely that she differs, in some article of faith, or revealed doctrine, from the ancient orthodox Church. All matters of discipline must therefore be thown out of the question; and whatever objection is made from that head is but trifling, whether the facts objected be true or false.

CHAPTER V.

POPERY AS ANCIENT AS CHRISTIANITY.

SECTION I.

NO CHRISTIAN CHURCH TEACHING A DOCTRINE OPPOSITE TO POPERY EVER APPEARED IN THE WORLD BEFORE IT.

It is morally impossible that a considerable revolution should happen, either in Church or state, without being ever taken notice of by any historian writing in or about the time when it happened. Nay, the thing is contrary not only to experience, but the very immediate end of history, which is to instruct posterity in the knowledge of what has happened in former ages; and, though transactions of the greatest moment may be mangled and disguised by authors, according as they are affected, they can never be wholly overlooked or omitted by them.

This is particularly true in reference to any considerable changes in religion; because such changes being the constant source of extraordinary events, by causing disturbances, and, many times, entire revolutions, in the state, can never escape the notice of an historian; and a person may as soon make me believe the greatest contradiction in nature as that such changes may really happen, and not be mentioned in any history of that state, or kingdom, in which they happened.

What historian has ever written the life of Queen

Elizabeth but made the changes in religion, and the establishment of the *reformation* in England, the principal subject of his history? The same may be said of those who wrote the lives of the first Christian emperors, whose histories are all filled with ample relations of the heresies that started up in their times, and the disturbances they occasioned both in Church and state, the opposition they met with, the princes that favored them, the fathers that wrote against them, the councils wherein they were condemned, &c. Nay, I dare challenge any Protestant to name me one considerable heresy — I mean, what both Papists and Protestants own to be a heresy — whereof there is not a particular account in some history of note; as, who was the first author of it, where and when it was first broached, what progress it made, what influence it had upon the affairs of Christendom, what bishops opposed it, what books were written against it, what councils called to condemn it, and other such particulars as are a full evidence for the truth of the main fact.

Hence I infer, 1st, that a universal silence of historians in relation to any considerable change in matters of religion is a proof, amounting to a moral demonstration, that there never happened any such change.

I infer, 2dly, that to accuse any church of gross errors, whereof no particular author or beginning is to be found in any authentic record, is a mere groundless charge, and cannot be maintained with any color of justice or reason.

It is upon these two principles I shall ground my argument, to prove that the doctrine called Popery is as ancient as Christianity; and I have endeavored to set the whole matter in as clear a light as is possible, in the following manner.

If the doctrine called Popery be not as ancient as Christianity, then Protestancy, as far as it is directly opposite to it, must be the religion which Christ and his apostles established in the world. I presume all Protest-

ants will readily grant this; nay, if I am not under a very great mistake, it is what they principally contend for. Because the most plausible thing they can say for themselves is, that the whole business of the *reformation* was to recover religion from the *corruptions* introduced into it, and bring it back to its ancient purity.

But it follows hence that there have been two great changes, in the state of the Christian religion, since its first establishment by Christ and his apostles — the 1st from Protestancy to Popery, (for Popery had full possession of the whole visible Church for many hundred years before the *reformation;*) the 2d from Popery to Protestantism, which was effected by that *reformation*. These two changes, therefore, must be clearly made out from the incontestable evidence of authentic histories and records. For, if it cannot be thus evidently proved that the first change, viz., "from Protestancy to Popery," happened as really and truly as the second, viz., "Popery to Protestantism," then it will follow that Protestancy never had a being before Popery; the consequence whereof will be, that Popery had its beginning from the very times of the apostles.

Now these two changes, if they both really happened, may be called at least equally great. Nay, the first, viz. "from Protestancy to Popery," appears evidently far more difficult than the second, by reason of some doctrines in the Church of Rome which, if they were not taught by the apostles, could never be introduced but with the greatest difficulty imaginable. I shall instance in a few.

1st. It being a principle of Protestancy, as well as Popery, that Christ alone has the power of instituting sacraments, because he alone can appoint proper instruments to convey his grace to our souls, if Protestancy, which allows but of two sacraments, was the religion taught by the apostles and established in the infancy of the Church, I leave any man of common sense to judge whether five new ones, never heard of

in the time of the apostles, could have been afterwards imposed upon the Church, and rendered an article of her faith, without the greatest difficulty and the most vigorous opposition, at least for some time. Would not every good Protestant bishop have immediately stood in the gap, and cried out against such a monstrous innovation? Would they not have written against it, and alleged that Christ had instituted but two sacraments, that the apostles never had preached but two, that the number precisely of two, and no more, had been handed down to them by the immediate successors of the apostles, and that, therefore, no human power could make any addition to it without impiety and sacrilege? Finally, would they not have stigmatized the first authors of such an innovation, and cut them off from the communion of the Church? It is certainly most rational to judge that the bishops and pastors then in being, if they were of the religion which Protestants now profess, would have exerted their utmost zeal and authority in a case of that importance; unless we suppose they were all laid asleep with opium, or doted and knew nothing of the matter; for no man hitherto has ever heard or read one word of any opposition or resistance made to the coining of any one of the five sacraments which are now denied by Protestants, or of any disturbance that has ever happened in the Church about it. Very strange that such a change should ever happen without noise or trouble; or, if there were disturbances about it, that no historian should give us any information of it.

2dly, I should be glad to know by what secret charm the *mass* got admittance into the universal Church, if it was neither instituted by Christ nor introduced by the practice of the apostles themselves. For, if the Popish doctrine relating to it, viz., "that it is a true sacrifice, or an external oblation of the real body and blood of Christ under the forms of bread and wine, ordained by Christ himself at his last supper,"—if this, I say, be false doctrine, we cannot doubt but that the

apostles and their immediate successors were wholly strangers to it; and that, by consequence, none of the primitive bishops or priests ever said *mass*, as being all true Protestants in this as well as other articles of faith.

Here, then, lies the stress of the difficulty, viz., how all the bishops and priests in the world, having been brought up, as we must suppose, in the principles of the Protestant religion, and, by consequence, in a total ignorance both of the doctrine and use of the *mass*, should afterwards not only unanimously agree to embrace this new scheme of religious worship, but even to regard it as the most sacred and solemn part of the public devotion of the Church. What! could all this be done without contradiction, noise, or trouble? Or, if there were contentions, schisms, and disputes about it, as it is morally impossible but there must have been, unless the whole thing be a fiction, could events of that importance escape the notice of all historians?

But, 3dly, sacramental confession has its peculiar difficulty; for it is not a mere speculative point, but of all practical duties the most repugnant to human nature; and I dare say no man would ever have submitted to it who was not first convinced that he could not be saved without it. But what increases the difficulty of introducing the practice of it is, that no dignity, whether in Church or state, ever exempted any member of the Church of Rome from the obligation of it. All bishops, kings, and princes, nay, emperors and popes themselves, have an equal share in the burden with the very meanest of the laity. They must all fall prostrate at the feet of their confessors, discover their most hidden sins, submit them to their censure, and perform the penance enjoined them.

Now, if this was not the doctrine of the apostles, — if all the popes and bishops of the primitive Church were brought up in the principles of the *reformation*, — finally, if the obligation of auricular confession be a Popish error, and was, by consequence, unknown to antiquity,

then I cannot forbear asking this question: Which of the two is the most surprising, the extravagance of those who first took a fancy to impose this heavy yoke both on themselves and others, or the weakness of those who submitted to it? For that it was effectually submitted to is plain matter of fact. But since the very attempt of introducing a novelty (if it really was one) so burdensome and odious was no better than a mad and extravagant undertaking, can any one imagine it met not with very great opposition in the beginning, and put the whole Church into disorder and confusion? Is it not natural to suppose that both the laity and clergy rose up in defence of the Christian liberty their forefathers had enjoyed; and alleged that, since all Christians before them had been saved without stooping to the yoke of confession, they saw no reason but they might be saved upon the same easy terms? And would not all these particulars (had they really happened) have been recorded in some history of note? Truly, whoever believes the contrary is capable of swallowing any improbability whatsoever.

This, therefore, is an incontestable truth, viz., that a change from Protestancy to Popery, in the particulars I have specified, could not be effected without great opposition, nor, by consequence, without occasioning troubles and schisms in the Church. For further proof whereof, let us suppose that a set of men should at present attempt to introduce the number of seven sacraments, the *mass*, auricular confession, or any noted branch of Popery, into the Church of England, and I appeal to the judgment of all men in their senses, whether those religious zealots would not meet with a very warm opposition from all the bishops and the whole English clergy!

We have an instance, of a fresh date, of their episcopal zeal for the Protestant religion in the reign of James II., who only endeavored to compel them to order his proclamation for liberty of conscience to be read in all

the churches. But the world knows what success he met with, and the history of the seven golden candlesticks will never be forgotten. Their zeal threw the whole nation into a flame, and Whitehall became, soon after, too warm for that unfortunate prince. If, therefore, Protestancy was the religion established by Christ and his apostles, and professed in the infancy of the Church, can we imagine the good primitive bishops, who were so ready to lay down their lives for the Church, were not full as zealous against Popery as those of the Church of England? or that they were not ready to stand in the gap and oppose the torrent with their utmost strength when they saw it flowing in upon the Church?

But such an imagination being wholly groundless, it follows that what I have undertaken to prove is an undeniable truth, viz, that the first supposed change, from Protestancy to Popery, could not be effected with less difficulty than the second, from Popery to Protestancy. Nay, to speak naturally, the difficulty to effect it, and, by consequence, the opposition made to it, must have been much greater, for the reasons I have given.

Now no man of any reading can be so ignorant as not to know with what difficulty and opposition the second change, called the *reformation*, was begun, carried on, and at last effected. Innumerable histories are filled with ample relations of the obstinate and bloody wars it occasioned in Germany, France, the Low Countries, and other kingdoms and states. They all tell us with what vigor it was opposed by Leo X. and the following popes, by the emperor Charles V., Francis I. of France and his successors, and even by Henry VIII., under whom great numbers suffered in Smithfield for that cause. Finally, the history of the Council of Trent, in which it was condemned, is known by all men of learning; so that no man can doubt of the truth of a fact so particularized and circumstantiated in all histories written upon that subject.

Here, then, I may justly demand of Protestants the same satisfactory account of the first supposed change, from Protestancy to Popery. For, since they were always equally opposite, and the same causes produce naturally the same effects, no rational man will ever be made to believe that a change from Popery to Protestancy, in a few kingdoms only, should occasion such a number of remarkable events, cause so many bloody wars, such disturbances in the Church and revolutions in the state, and that an entire change from Protestancy to Popery should not be attended with any of the like effects.

I desire, therefore, some tolerable account of the particular circumstances of this change; as, who were the principal actors in it — in what age it happened — whether it came in by degrees or all at once. If all at once, then we must either suppose that the whole Christian world went to bed Protestants and rose Papists the next morning, by unanimous consent; or that a formidable body of Papists, like Cadmus's armed men, rose out of the ground, and in a trice cut the throats of all true Protestants in the world; or, finally, that Popery dropped from the clouds, and got full possession of the universal Church without being perceived by any body till the clear-sighted Martin Luther made the happy discovery: for truly I can think of no other way to render it possible that it should get admittance all at once, or without opposition, noise, or trouble.

This, however, being somewhat out of the way, and proper only for machinery exploits upon the theatre, I must rather suppose Protestants will say it came in by degrees. But then it is reasonable they should give me a satisfactory answer to a few questions, and prove the truth of the facts from unquestionable records. For, if Popery came in by degrees, it got footing first in one place, then in another, as the *reformation* did in Germany, Switzerland, and Geneva, before it crossed the seas to visit England. So that we must suppose there

were Protestant and Popish states and kingdoms for some time in former ages, as there have been ever since the *reformation*. I ask, then, where it was that Popery made its first entrance. Was it in the east or west, south or north? What kingdom, state, or nation, abjured the Protestant religion first? Who was the first Popish bishop of Rome, emperor, or king? What Protestant and Popish kings were contemporary? What wars happened in their several reigns about religion? What books were written for and against Popery? What Protestant councils were called to condemn it? And, lastly, by what name were those who adhered to the ancient Protestant religion distinguished from the others, who embraced Popery? For I am sensible that Protestants and Papists are names invented since the *reformation*. And since it is highly improbable that two such different communions, or religions, as those of the *reformation* and the Church of Rome should be, at any time, in the world without names to distinguish them, — because even the most inconsiderable sect never wanted a name, — I should be glad to know what their names were in former ages, viz., from the time that Popery first got footing in some particular state or kingdom till its full establishment in the universal visible Church.

I could ask a great many more puzzling questions, but I shall be satisfied if Protestants can but answer the few I have put, and produce unquestionable authority for proof of their answers, as Papists can do to prove every material circumstance of the *reformation*, and as both Protestants and Papists can do in reference to any considerable heresy that ever was broached in the Church. But if they can give no tolerable account of the forementioned particulars, as I am sure they must be conscious to themselves they cannot; if there never was an historian in the world that wrote the history of the wonderful change from Protestancy to Popery, under whatever names you please, — as there are hundreds who

have written the history of the *reformation*, — then it is reasonable to conclude that the supposed change is a mere fiction, and that any Grub Street tale has full as good a foundation.

I doubt not, however, but that, by the art of invention, some ingenious hypothesis may be made: an imaginary scheme may be formed to show the metaphysical possibility of a thing that never has happened, nor ever will happen. But this way will not do. I demand not the invention of a fruitful brain, but plain facts, and good history to prove them. Nothing less will satisfy me, nor indeed any man who is not fond of being deceived. I desire to know the true history of Popery; I mean not that Popery which was established every where upon the ruins of Paganism, whereof I have already given a very good account, but of that Popery which we suppose to be the younger sister of Protestantism. I desire to know when and where this unfortunate babe, so hated and persecuted by the best-natured people in Europe, was born; where she was nursed; who were her parents and masters; what memorable adventures she met with when she made her first appearance; by what trick or sleight she got the inheritance away from Protestancy, her supposed elder sister, nay, and maintained the full possession of it for many hundred years; — in a word, how she came to be mistress of the whole Christian world. These are the most material points, for which I demand authentic history; and till I have some good account of them I shall continue, with a very safe and easy conscience, in my belief that the religion which now is called Popery is as ancient as Christianity, and that it never had any other beginning than what Christ and his apostles gave it.

SECTION II.

THE SAME ARGUMENTS CONTINUED.

Though the gentlemen of the *reformation* may find it too hard a task to inform us how Popery in general got into the Church, they may, perhaps, be able to give us a better account of some particular branches of it. I shall, therefore, to avoid being tedious, choose only one of the three I have already spoken of. I mean, the *mass;* which, being the most solemn worship both of the Greek and Latin Church, could not easily steal into the world without being perceived, if it had not its beginning from Christ and his apostles. I must likewise observe that the *mass* is, in the opinion of most Protestants, the very rankest part of Popery, and the most hated by them; witness the sanguinary laws made against it in Queen Elizabeth's time. And therefore, if Protestancy was established in the world before Popery, I leave any man of sense to judge whether the *mass* could get admittance without the greatest difficulty and resistance imaginable.

However, I shall give one remarkable positive proof of its antiquity; and I make choice of it, because every Englishman, who has but read the chronicles, will easily apprehend the force of it. England was converted from Saxon Paganism to Christianity towards the end of the sixth century — that is, about five hundred years before the Norman conquest, and about nine hundred years before the *reformation*. The persons who converted it were sent from Rome by Pope Gregory the Great, and, we may be sure, preached and established the religion of the place from whence they came, which at that time flourished in all parts of the Christian world. The religion they brought over with them continued in England, without any alteration, from its first establish-

ment till the pretended reformation; as the Book of Homilies plainly owns, in telling us that, before the *reformation,* "whole Christendom had been drowned in abominable idolatry for the space of eight hundred years, and more," for I presume England was a part of the Christendom it speaks of.

Hence it follows, 1st, that, as Popery was the religion of England in the beginning of the *reformation*, so it was that very religion to which it was converted, nine hundred years before, by St. Austin and his fellow-missioners.

It follows, 2dly, that the *mass* and Christianity came together into England; because, as I have already observed, it cannot be doubted but that they who brought their religion from Rome, and received all their directions from thence, as St. Austin and his fellow-laborers did even in things of much less moment, (witness holy Bede's History of England,) — it cannot be doubted, I say, but they established the same form of worship in England as was practised at Rome.

Now, that *mass* was at that time said at Rome is manifest from St. Greg. 8 Hom. upon the Gospels, where we find these remarkable words: *Quia largienti domino missarum solemnia ter hodie celebraturi sumus, loqui diu de evangelica lectione non possumus;* that is, "Since, God willing, I shall say *mass* thrice to-day, I cannot be very long in my discourse upon the gospel." This was spoken by St. Gregory on Christmas-day, which is the only day in the whole year on which every Roman Catholic Priest says *mass* thrice; and it is an unanswerable proof that the *mass* was so well established in the Church of Rome, at the time when England was converted, that even the custom of saying three *masses* on Christmas-day, which is but a point of discipline, was then observed in that Church.

But it follows, 3dly, that, at the time when England was converted, the *mass* was the public worship of the whole Christian Church; because we read nowhere

that there was any schism or disagreement about that article in Pope Gregory's time.

Here, then, we have a clear and intelligible account that the *mass* was established, in the whole Christian Church, nine hundred years before the *reformation* — and so well established that no man can, with any color or probability of reason, pretend that it was then a new thing; and if any one should pretend it, I can produce unquestionable authority to disprove him.

The most ancient of the fathers have left us an account of the manner of celebrating *mass* in their times — as St. Justinus, Martyr, (Apol. 2;) the author of the Apostolic Constitutions, (L. 2, c. 57, and L. 8, c. 5, et seq.;) St. Cyril of Jerusalem, (Catech. 5, Mystag.) Besides, all learned men own St. Basil and St. Chrysostom to be the authors of the liturgies that bear their names, and are to this day used in the Greek Church. The Roman Liturgy is likewise very ancient, as appears from the *sacramentary*, or Ritual of Pope Gregory the Great, who abridged the Liturgy of Pope Gelasius, a father of the 5th age; and he only put it into some better order, with a few inconsiderable alterations made in it. So that any impartial reader of antiquity will find the whole Church *at mass*, the 4th and 5th century, and a cloud of venerable witnesses to attest it.

But I shall in a few words trace it even to the 3d and 2d century, and that, with the help of four substantial Protestant witnesses; I mean, the four Magdeburgians, or Centuriators, who very honestly own the fact, in censuring St. Ignatius, (the disciple of St. John,) the holy martyr Irenæus, St. Cyprian, St. Martial and Tertullian, for teaching the doctrine of the *mass*, the substance or essence whereof consists precisely in being "an unbloody sacrifice offered to God by the priests of the new law upon an altar," or, what amounts to the same, "an external oblation of the body and blood of Christ, under the forms of bread and wine." For, as to the ceremonies, they belong only to the decency,

or solemnity, but are no part of the substance of the *mass*. And, therefore, as they were gradually introduced in the primitive ages, so, if the Church thought fitting, she might even now make alterations in them.

This being premised, let us see what the Centuriators have blamed in the forementioned fathers of the 2d and 3d ages. St. Ignatius is censured by them for using these words, *offerre et immolare sacrificium*, (Epist. ad Smern.,) "to immolate, or offer sacrifice;" St. Irenæus, for saying that "Christ had taught a new oblation in the New Testament, which the Church, receiving from the apostles, does offer throughout the whole world." (Iren. L. 4, c. 32.) St. Cyprian is accused of superstition for saying that "the priest is Christ's representative, and offers sacrifice to God the Father." (Cyp. L. 2, c. 3.) They reprehend Tertullian for using the words *sacrificium offerre*, "to offer sacrifice," (L. de cœna Domini,) and St. Martial for saying that "sacrifice is offered to God, the Creator, upon the altar."

Here is a plain confession of four Protestant writers, that *mass* was said in the 2d and 3d centuries, and five eminent fathers of those ages are quoted for it. St. Ignatius had received his doctrine from St. John himself, and been eye-witness of his actions; and the rest lived so near the time of the apostles, that I dare presume to say they were somewhat better acquainted with what they had taught and practised than the pretended reformers, who appeared in the world some twelve or thirteen hundred years after. Yet then it was that this august and venerable sacrifice, which the prophet Malachi had foretold "should be offered up to God from east to west," (Mal. i. 11,) which, for near fifteen hundred years together, had been the relief of departed souls, the consolation of the just, and sanctuary of sinners, was, by the impiety of a few miscreants, endered the object of hatred and contempt, and banished out of the Church, as far as in them lay.

However this be, I am sensible I have proved more

than I needed; because my only business is to put Protestants to their proof concerning the beginning of the *mass*. I am but the defendant, they are the plaintiffs. They are, therefore, bound to make good their charge, and show that the *mass* is a Popish invention, and has no foundation in the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; that the primitive Christians knew nothing of it, and that, by consequence, it had its beginning in some distant age from the time of the apostles.

I have already given my reason to show the moral impossibility of introducing it without the greatest opposition, noise, and trouble, in case the primitive Church was wholly a stranger to it. I have also made it evident that changes, contests, and troubles, can never happen in Church or state, without being recorded in some history of the times in which they happened. If, therefore, the *mass* be without foundation in the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, if the use of it was unknown in the primitive Church, I desire any Protestant, for the credit and reputation of his cause, and the satisfaction of tender consciences, to let us know the names of the writers who lived about the time when the *mass* was first brought into the Church, and have written the history of it. For I presume it is from them we should certainly learn who were the first inventors or promoters of it; how, where, and when, such an extraordinary novelty was first brought into credit. And surely they will not conceal from us one very remarkable particular, viz., who was the first *massing* pope, bishop, or priest. I expect we shall also be informed what resistance it met with; who were the zealous Protestant bishops that opposed it; what disturbances it raised; in what councils it was condemned; and with what reluctance the people were at first brought to be present at it.

These surely, and other such remarkable facts, will be the subject of the histories written in or about the time in which they happened. But if no account of

them appears in any ancient or creditable history, I must repeat what I have already laid down as a principle, viz., that such a silence, in a matter of the greatest importance, is a proof, amounting to a moral demonstration, that they never happened at all; that the pretended change, from a total denial or ignorance of the *mass* to an entire establishment of it, is altogether fictitious; and that, by consequence, the *mass* had its beginning from the institution of Christ and the doctrine and practice of the apostles; according to St. Austin's judgment, who, writing against the Donatists, gives this for a rule: "That, when any doctrine is found generally received in the visible Church, in any age whatsoever, whereof there is no certain author or beginning to be found, then it is sure that such a doctrine came down from Christ and his apostles." (L. 4, de bap. c. 6, v. 24, as also L. de Unit Eccl. c. 19.)

If any one pretends that the *mass* crept in by insensible degrees, and so made no noise or disturbances to be taken notice of by any historian, the answer is so very weak that I am almost ashamed to confute it seriously. For, 1st, the thing is without example; and I defy Protestants to produce one single instance of the like nature in any considerable heresy owned as such by both sides. For let them name what heresy they please, as that of the Arians, Nestorians, Eutychians, Monothelites, Pelagians, Donatists, Novatians, &c., they all caused great disturbances in the Church; histories of them have been written, and we can show how, where, and when, they began, what progress they made, what fate they met with, and other particulars; and to pretend that Popery alone, supposing it to be a compound of gross errors, or any branch of it, but particularly the *mass*, should steal into the Church like a thief in the night, without being perceived or opposed by any body, is as mere a whim as ever was hatched in a distracted brain.

But, 2dly, the thing will appear to be altogether

impracticable, if we consider how watchful the Church has always been in discovering any heresy, and how vigorous in opposing the growth of it; so that many have been suppressed at their very appearance, as Quietism was towards the end of the last century. And it is an undeniable truth, that the Church has exerted herself with the same watchfulness and vigor in all ages, without the least regard to the dignity or character of the persons who, by mistake or otherwise, endeavored to corrupt the purity of the Christian faith.

Thus, though Tertullian and Origen were two great pillars of the Church in their time, and their orthodox writings are justly valued by all men of learning, yet the Church was watchful enough to discover the tares that grew up amongst the wheat, and the reputation neither of their wit nor learning could save their errors from being condemned. The same may be said of some errors held by Lactantius, Arnobius, Cassianus, and others, which could not escape the watchful eye of the Church, and were accordingly censured by her. Nay, what is most remarkable, the error of the holy bishop and martyr, St. Cyprian, who was a man of an extraordinary character, was very warmly opposed, and underwent the same fate. So true it is, that the Church has always been extremely jealous of the purity of her faith, watchful in detecting the least error against it, and inflexible in doing justice upon it. And is it then possible that a thing so odious to Protestants as the *mass* should either creep into the Church without being perceived, or, if perceived, should not be immediately opposed and condemned? Is it probable that the *gross errors* of Popery should be the only criminals that escaped the hands of justice? But the thing is so very gross in itself, so contradictory to experience, and inconsistent with reason, that it confutes itself. I shall add two short remarks of no small importance.

I observe, 1st, that, if the *reformed* religion had

antiquity on its side, Martin Luther, the first and principal *reformer*, who neither wanted wit nor learning, would not have overlooked or slighted an advantage of that importance; because the ancient religion is certainly the true one. And, therefore, since it is an undeniable fact, that this capital *reformer*, instead of appealing to the ancient fathers, treated them as professed enemies, nay, declared, in express terms, (as will appear in the following chapter,) that fathers, councils, and the practice of ages, were against him, it follows that the doctrine of the *reformation* can lay no claim to antiquity, but has the infamous mark of novelty stamped upon it.

I observe, 2dly, that, though I have named several of the ancient fathers, who were censured for particular errors, I have never heard of any father or doctor of the Church, in all antiquity, who ever was censured for any Popish error; I mean, for any of those pretended errors which Protestants call Popery, as the mass, purgatory, invocation of saints, &c; which, however, are clearly found in their writings. This is a demonstration that the ancient Church did not look upon them as errors, but as orthodox doctrine. For, had they been looked upon as errors, they could not have escaped the censure of the Church. As, for instance, the doctrine of the mass would have been no less censured, in St. Cyprian, than his teaching the re-baptism of persons baptized by heretics; and since the one was really condemned, and not the other, it is an unanswerable proof that the mass was held to be the doctrine of Christ and his apostles.

I shall conclude with summing up the principal heads of the argument I have handled in this chapter, that the reader may have a clear view of them at once.

If Protestancy, as opposite to Popery, be the true religion, then it is that religion which was taught by Christ and his apostles; and, by consequence, Protestancy had a being before Popery. If so, then it follows

that there happened, in some age or other, an entire change from Protestancy to Popery, which was in the possession of the whole Church for many hundred years. But it is morally impossible that such a change should happen without opposition, nay, without causing great disturbances both in Church and state; and it is without example, that such considerable events should neither be recorded in any histories written about the time when they happened, nor transmitted to posterity by writers of the following age: therefore, if Protestants cannot produce any such history, (as it is certain they cannot,) the pretended change from Protestancy to Popery is wholly groundless; and, by consequence, the religion of the Church of Rome is as ancient as Christianity, and her enemies are guilty of as many calumnies as they lay errors to her charge.

SECTION III.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Objection 1. The whole argument of this chapter amounts to no more than a mere negative proof, and therefore is not conclusive.

Ans. That some negative arguments are as strong as any positive demonstration; though there be others that are frivolous and childish. As, for instance, it is as strong a proof as any positive demonstration, that Great Britain never was conquered by the Turks, because no history has ever made mention of it; and a man that should refuse to yield to such a proof because it is but a negative one would justly deserve to be cudgelled into better reason. But if any one should seriously maintain that neither William the Conqueror

nor Henry VIII ever ate black puddings because the fact is not recorded in any history, I believe he would not get the reputation of a profound wit by it. Now these two specimens may, in some measure, direct us to distinguish a good negative argument from a bad one; and I dare confidently say that the universal silence of historians proves my points as effectually as that Great Britain never was conquered by the Turks.

Obj. 2. Praying in an unknown tongue, jubilees, and celibacy of priests, were not practised in the ancient Church.

Ans. Though all this were true, the objection is impertinent; because no article of faith is concerned in it.

This, and the four following objections are taken out of a little anonymous book, entitled "Friendly and seasonable Advice to the Roman Catholics of England." But though the book be little in bulk, it contains the largest collection of barefaced lies and calumnies that ever were crowded together under one cover. The author, whoever he may be, has, perhaps, already accounted for it before the great tribunal; for it was written full thirty years ago. But if he be still alive, I cannot do less than return the favor of his friendly and seasonable advice, by advising him to repent while it is yet time, and atone for the wrong he has done to truth.

Obj. 3. "The use of images," says this author, "can be derived no higher (as to its being decreed) than the second Council of Nice, anno 787."

Ans. The consubstantiality of the Son can be derived no higher (as to its being decreed) than the first Council of Nice, anno 325; and is this a good proof that it was not the faith of the Church in the three first centuries?

However, with the Adviser's good leave, even the actual use of images was introduced into the Church long before the lawfulness of it was defined in the sec-

ond Nicene Council. For how could it otherwise have occasioned the heresy of the Iconoclasts, or image-breakers, which was condemned in that council? Though, in reality, it is nothing to the purpose to know when the actual use of them first became the public practice. For it is certain the Church never obliged the faithful to it as a thing essential to Christianity. On the contrary, it is a point of discipline only, which was not universally practised till idolatry was utterly extinguished in Christendom. But, since that time, the Church had reason to declare, that "the images of Christ and his saints are to be retained, and that a due honor and veneration are to be given to them." Conc. Trid. Sess. 25. Nor do I see how any thing of moment can be objected against it. But to a thinking spectator it cannot but appear somewhat odd, that the Church of England should admit the pictures of Moses and Aaron into her churches, and banish those of Jesus Christ and his apostles.

Obj. 4. "The administering the sacrament in one kind," says the Friendly Adviser, (p. 15,) "is no older than the Council of Constance."

Ans. If he means that the Church's faith before that council was, that "administering the sacrament in one kind is contrary to Christ's institution," (as he must mean, if he pretends to speak to the purpose,) his assertion is flatly false. But if his meaning be, that the Council of Constance ordered that the sacrament should, from that time forward, be administered to the laity in one kind only, though the fact be true, the objection is foreign to the matter under debate, if it be made evident that "receiving under one or both kinds is a point of discipline only."

Now, that it has always been regarded by the Church as such, is an undeniable truth; because it is without dispute, that, in the primitive ages, the sacrament was received sometimes in both kinds, sometimes in one. I shall not need to prove the former; and there are three

undeniable instances of the latter from the practice of the primitive Church.

1st, in the communion of infants, who were allowed to drink of the cup, without receiving the consecrated host. Cyp. L. de lapsis.

2dly, in domestic communions — the faithful being permitted, by reason of the persecution in the second and third ages, to carry consecrated hosts to their own houses for private communions in one kind only. Tert. L. 2, and Uxoram. c. 5; S. Cyp. L. de lapsis.

And, 3dly, in the manner frequently used of administering the sacrament to the sick. Euseb. Lib. 6, Hist. c. 44, p. 246.

All which are unanswerable proofs, that the manner of receiving the communion, either in one or both kinds, was regarded by the primitive Church as a point of discipline only, and, therefore, changeable according as the nature or exigency of circumstances should require. And it cannot be questioned but the primitive Church understood the meaning of Christ's precept and institution somewhat better than our late *reformers*, and would never have allowed of a communion under one kind only, upon any exigency whatsoever, if they had looked upon it as a mangling of the sacrament, or a violation of Christ's ordinance.

And, therefore, what the Friendly Adviser says, (p. 10,) that the taking away the cup from the laity is contrary to our Savior's institution, is more than he can make out. But what he adds, viz., that "the very Council of Constance, which first enjoined communion in one kind, confesses that it is contrary to our Savior's institution," is a calumny not to be matched but by many others of his own forging in the same book. For it is, in effect, to call the council an assembly either of atheists, or of fools and madmen. For who but atheists and madmen are capable of making a decree like this, viz.: "Notwithstanding that Christ has commanded all men to receive the sacrament in both

kinds, it shall be given in one kind only to the people"? Surely a man must renounce his reason, to judge that an assembly of Christian bishops and pastors, in their senses, should make such a mad and impious decree in the face of the whole world.

As to the council's *non obstante*, &c., which is made the pretence for this calumny, the obvious and genuine meaning of it is this, viz.: "Notwithstanding that our Savior instituted the sacrament in both kinds, all are not commanded and bound to receive it in both kinds." Which is no less true than to say that "though God has instituted all sorts of meats for the use of mankind, yet all men are not commanded or bound to eat of all sorts of meats." Nay, the Antichians were, by the apostles, expressly forbid blood and things strangled. Both kinds, indeed, were consecrated by Christ, that both might be offered up in sacrifice, and be a perfect representation of his death by the mystical separation of his body and blood. But since neither laymen nor women are priests, as they have no power to consecrate, so they are not within the command of receiving both kinds.

Obj. 5. "The doctrine of purgatory," says the Friendly Adviser, (p. 12,) "was first built upon the credit of those fabulous dialogues attributed to Gregory the First."

Ans. This is very strange; for, according to the best of my skill in chronology, St. Austin lived about two hundred years before St. Gregory; St. Cyril of Jerusalem is more ancient than St. Austin; and Tertullian than both. Yet these, and many more of the same antiquity, teach the doctrine of purgatory as fully and clearly as the Council of Trent. Let us hear Mr. Thorndike, an eminent Protestant divine. "The practice," says he, "of the Church interceding for them [the dead] at the celebration of the Eucharist, is so general and so ancient, that it cannot be thought to have come in upon imposture, but that the same

aspersion will seem to take hold of the common Christianity." Thorndike's Just Weights and Measures, c. 16, p. 106.

This is somewhat more charitable and mannerly than what the Friendly Adviser tells us, (p. 36,) that "the doctrine of purgatory has been decreed by the Church of Rome only to oblige people to give liberally for themselves, or their deceased friends, to those who sell their prayers so commonly, that they occasioned that proverb, 'No penny, no Pater Noster.'"

What wonderful exploits will not such logic as this perform against Popery! But, if it should be applied to baptisms and burials in the Church of England, I believe the parsons would not be very much pleased with it. For let me tell the Friendly Adviser, "no penny, no Pater Noster" is much truer in Protestant baptisms and burials than in Popish masses for the dead. For I fear there are but few parsons so disinterested as to baptize or bury without their fee; whereas, there are thousands of masses said for the dead, without the least view or prospect of gain.

Obj. 6. The Adviser is likewise pleased to acquaint us (p. 14) that auricular confession to a priest was never imposed, as necessary, till the Lateran Council, anno 1215, can. 21.

Ans. I must here return upon him with my former argument, viz., that no man of common sense will believe him, unless he can produce some history of the 13th century, giving an account of the opposition which this new odious article met with, and the disturbances it occasioned in the Church. For it is as incredible that a new doctrine, so hateful and repugnant to human nature as that of auricular confession, after its having been believed unnecessary to salvation for near twelve hundred years, should be imposed upon the Church as necessary, and submitted to without opposition, noise, or trouble, — this, I say, is as incredible as the most fabulous romance that ever was invented.

Since, therefore, the canon of the Lateran Council, relating to the point in question, was effectually received by the universal Church, without any manner of opposition or trouble, it is a demonstration that it defined nothing but the ancient faith of the Church, nor imposed that, as a necessary duty, which had been believed unnecessary before.

The naked truth of the whole matter is this: the obligation or necessity of auricular confession had always been the faith of the Church; but there was a great neglect in the practice of it among Christians, some delaying it from year to year, and others putting it off to their very last sickness. To put a stop to this evil, the Lateran Council fixed the time; and, by its 21st canon, obliges all the faithful "to confess once a year, and receive the sacrament, at Easter." And let any one judge whether this be imposing a new article of faith, as the Adviser tells us. But it is his method to charge through thick and thin, and calumniate boldly, in hopes that at least some part of the dirt he throws at us may stick.

Obj. 7. No man will at least deny, that the article of transubstantiation was first coined in the Lateran Council.

Ans. I shall make bold both to deny it, and prove it to be false. The Friendly Adviser (p. 15) calls transubstantiation the discriminating doctrine of our Church, yet, at the same time, has the confidence to tell us that our own doctrine acknowledges that it was not held by the fathers, (for which he quotes Valentia;) 2dly, that our schoolmen confess that transubstantiation is not ancient, (for which Suarez is quoted;) and, 3dly, that Scotus and Duranus plainly deny it. It is very strange that four such eminent divines, and noted Papists, should betray their own Church in a discriminating point of doctrine. But false quotations make as fine a show in the margin as true ones; and ignorant people, for whom alone the Friendly Adviser has

calculated his treatise, will look upon him as a scholar of the first magnitude, and easily mistake bold forgeries for deep learning.

But, to give a direct answer to the objection, the Lateran Council decreed nothing but the ancient faith of the Church. For there is a large difference between coining words and coining articles of faith. All men of learning know that the word *consubstantial* was first made use of, in the great Council of Nice, to express the divinity of Christ, against the Arians. Was this, then, coining a new article of faith? No, it was only coining a new word to express the ancient faith, and distinguish Catholics from Arians. In like manner, therefore, the word *transubstantiation* was first used, in the 4th Lateran Council, to express the ancient faith in relation to the mystery of the holy Eucharist, as appears from the writings of the ancient fathers.

The word *transubstantiation* signifies a change of one substance into another; and, in relation to the Eucharist, it signifies a change of the bread into the body, and of the wine into the blood, of our savior, Christ, made by the words of consecration. Now let us see whether the ancient fathers have not very plainly taught this doctrine.

St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, in Catech. 4, myst. "Since, therefore, Christ himself does thus affirm, and say of the bread, 'This is my body,' who from henceforward dares be so bold as to doubt of it? And since the same does assure us, and say, 'This is my blood,' who, I say, can doubt of it, and say it is not his blood? In Cana of Galilee, he once, with his sole will, turned water into wine, which much resembles blood. And does he not deserve to be credited that he changed wine into blood?"

St. Greg. Nyssen. in Orat. Catec. c. 37. "I do, therefore, now rightly believe, that the bread, sanctified by the word of God, is changed into the body of God the Word. And here, likewise, the bread, as the

apostle says, is sanctified by the word of God and prayer; not so that, by being eaten, it becomes the body of the Word, but because it is suddenly changed into his body, by this word, 'This is my body.' And this is effected by the virtue of benediction, by which the nature of those things which appear is transubstantiated into it."

St. Chrysost. Hom. 83, in Matt. "The things we propose are not done by human power; He, that wrought these things, at his last supper, is the author of what is done here. We hold but the place of ministers; but He that sanctifies and changes them is Christ himself."

St. Ambrose, de his qui Mysteriis initiantur. c. 9. "If Christ by his words was able to make something of nothing, shall he not be thought able to change one thing into another?"

St. Jerome, Epist. ad Heliod. "God forbid that I should speak detractingly of those men [bishops] who, succeeding the apostles in their functions, do make the body of Christ with their sacred mouth."

These are a small part of the testimonies of the ancient fathers, both Greek and Latin, who have explained the doctrine of transubstantiation in as clear terms as any Roman Catholic divine can now do. It is, therefore, a calumny to say that it was imposed upon the Church by the Lateran Council, which was held above seven hundred years after the fathers quoted by me explained it in their writings. The word was new indeed, but the doctrine is as ancient as the Church of Christ. Adamus Francisci (marg. Theol. p. 256) confesses that "transubstantiation entered early into the Church." And Antonius de Ada. mo. another Protestant writer, (Anat. Miss. p. 36,) fairly owns that "he has not hitherto been able to know when this opinion of the real and bodily being of Christ in the sacrament did begin;" which, according to St. Austin's maxim against the Donatists, is

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owning in effect that it had its beginning from Christ and his apostles. See above, p. 86.

But how could transubstantiation be coined into an article of faith in the Lateran Council, which was held anno 1215, when all the world knows that Berengarius was the author of a heresy against it in the 11th century, and, in that very century, was condemned by no less than eleven national or provincial councils; the last whereof, held at Placentia, anno 1094, defines, "That the bread and wine, when they are consecrated upon the altar, are truly and essentially changed into the body and blood of our Lord." Tom. 10, Conc. Lat. p. 502. And in the Roman Council, anno 1079, Berengarius was obliged to make his retractation in this form: "I, Berengarius, with my heart believe, and with my tongue confess, that the bread and wine which are placed upon the altar are, by the mystery of holy prayer, and the words of our Redeemer, substantially changed into the true, and proper, and life-giving flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." Both which are convincing proofs that Dr. Cosen imposes upon his reader, in his History of Transubstantiation, when he tells us (p. 159) that "it was invented about the middle of the 12th century, and confirmed by no ecclesiastical or papal decree before the year 1215;" unless he means the word instead of the thing signified by it, which is trifling instead of proving.

SECTION IV.

THE ADVISER'S SYSTEM CONCERNING THE FIRST ESTABLISHMENT OF POPERY

To return once more to our Friendly Adviser: I shall now take under consideration his wonderful contrivance

to bring in Popery in the dark. So that, if we believe him, it groped its way into the universal Church, without being perceived or opposed by any body. Now here lies the usefulness and ingenuity of the contrivance. Popery was certainly in possession of the universal visible Church for many hundred years before the *reformation*. The fact is so unquestionable that impudence itself cannot deny it; for, if it could, the Adviser would have been the readiest man to do it.

But the knot of the difficulty is, to give some rational account how it first got into possession. For, if it were allowed that Popery had possession of the Church from the very beginning of Christianity, the *reformed* Churches would not have a word to say for themselves. Or, if it were owned that it came in barefaced, whilst all men's eyes were open to observe it, Papists would ask a thousand troublesome questions about it; as, by whom, how, where, and when, it was brought in; whether no Protestant princes or bishops had zeal enough to oppose it; or no Protestant councils were called to condemn it; and the like. And unless these questions were answered categorically, and the answers proved from authentic history, the matter would look but very scurvily in the judgment of all wise men.

Wherefore, to avoid splitting upon either of these rocks, observe the ingenuity of our Friendly Adviser. For he has ordered matters so cunningly that, (unless we will question his veracity,) we must believe that Protestancy was thrust out, and Popery let in, and the faith of the Church turned topsy-turvy, without opposition, noise, or trouble, or scarce any body's being sensible of it. And, to render the matter evident even to a demonstration, he tells us that the whole business was transacted in the dark, and whilst the world was in a profound sleep; for which he quotes this clear text of Scripture: "The tares were sowed while men slept." Matt. xiii. 25. So that we can suppose no

less than that some strong soporiferous draught was given to all the bishops, doctors, and pastors, of the Church, which laid them all so fast asleep, threw whole Christendom into so deep a lethargy, and, in a word, produced such a universal ignorance and stupidity amongst all degrees of men, that they either could not distinguish black from white, or, if they could, were unable to exert themselves, in any manner, to oppose the absurd and monstrous doctrines that were imposed upon them. Nay, and the virtue of this powerful enchantment lasted from the year 900 till a few years before the *reformation;* all which time, an Egyptian darkness was spread over the whole face of the earth. And it was in the time of this universal ignorance and darkness, that the pope and his agents played all their pranks, established Popery with the greatest ease imaginable, and cut out work for the blessed *reformation* that followed. And thus the argument contained in the preceding sections is answered with a wet finger.

But truly there is scarce a fable in Ovid to be compared with this wonderful metamorphosis of the Church. That of Ulysses and his companions, changed into hogs, comes the nearest to it. And I think the Friendly Adviser has committed an oversight in not making use of this authentic piece, to illustrate and adorn his ingenious system. For, truly, "Ovidius, Lib. 14, Metamorphoses," would have made as beautiful a figure in the margin as the greatest part of the authors he has quoted.

However, to be somewhat more serious than the matter really deserves, I shall give a summary of it in his own words. "It cannot be denied," says he, "that, from the time of the decay of the western empire and the irruption of the Goths and Vandals into Europe, there began to be a great decay of learning, and barbarism crept in by degrees. And, at length, this ignorance became so universal, that the study of the liberal arts was generally laid aside. Yea, such gross

folly possessed the world, that Christians believed more absurd things than pagans gave credit to. And that age, which bred many of these errors, is commonly called the obscure age."

[Here he quotes Baronius, anno 900; so that this is the epoch from which the time of universal darkness is to be dated!] He continues, —

"This age was wholly without persons eminent for wit or learning, the very inferior priests not being able to translate an epistle into Latin; which Egyptian darkness continued, in all the western world, till a few years before the reformation."

I confess, six hundred years of Egyptian darkness was a fair time for the popes to play all their tricks of legerdemain, and juggle all mankind out of their senses. It is very strange however that, in all this time, there should not be one single man of the learning and zeal of Martin Luther, to prevent so great a mischief.

"This gross stupidity," says the Adviser, "must needs make the world apt and easy to be abused with the most absurd and monstrous doctrines; for ignorance is the mother of errors. This made way for the politic guides of Rome to impose such opinions on the Church as might best serve for their own ends. 'These tares were sowed while men slept.' Matt. xiii. 25. And there were many circumstances concurring in those unlucky ages, which contributed to the furthering of the Roman designs — the withdrawing of the emperors into the east, and the first decay of the western empire; then the destruction of the eastern, and the desolation of the famous oriental Churches by the spreading inundation of the Turks and Saracens. So that the pope had neither emperor nor patriarch, for a long time, to oppose him; the miseries of all Christendom giving him opportunity to make himself sole governor of these parts of the world." Section 3, p. 46, &c.

This, I think, is nonsense enough for one time. But from the words of our Friendly Adviser, one would be

apt to surmise that, from the loss of Constantinople till the *reformation*, the popes had either massacred or deposed all the Christian princes and bishops in the west. For what else can the poor man mean, by his saying that "the pope made himself sole governor of these parts of the world"?—which, whether it be meant of his temporal or spiritual power, is equally absurd. And as to what he says,—that "the pope for a long time had neither emperor nor patriarch to oppose him,"—it is notoriously known that since the reign of Charlemagne, who was crowned emperor in the 8th century, the West has never been without Christian emperors, nor the East without its patriarchs, even since the Turks became masters of Constantinople. And, therefore, the Adviser either wrote contrary to his own knowledge, or showed himself very ignorant of history.

To say nothing of his blunder in chronology concerning the first decay of the western empire, which happened several hundred years before the age of pretended darkness, let us briefly examine the system itself, and see whether there be any thing either like truth or probability in it. He tells us, then, that the dark times began from the year 900, and that this age, viz., the 10th, "bred many of the Popish errors." But how does this agree with the Book of Homilies, which says positively that, before the *reformation*, "whole Christendom had been drowned in abominable idolatry for the space of eight hundred years and more"? For, by good computation, this brings Popery two whole centuries (and as much more as you please) higher than the time unluckily pitched upon by the Adviser. Nay, the Homilist assures us that the abominable idolatry he speaks of (which, in Protestant language, expresses very pathetically the whole body of Papistical doctrine) was spread over whole Christendom even some time before the eighth century. So that, to the great disappointment of all the popes of the 10th and

following centuries, there was nothing for them to do in all that tedious time of Egyptian darkness in which our Friendly Adviser, out of his abundance of charity, has cut out so much good employment to keep them out of idleness. For, if we give credit to the Homilist, whose authority will probably carry it, their market was forestalled, and the whole business completed above two hundred years before they could come into play.

I shall, therefore, leave the Adviser to fight it out, as well as he can, with the Book of Homilies. But he has a more formidable enemy to deal with—I mean a whole multitude of authentic writers, bearing testimony that Popery was established in England full three hundred years before the 10th century. Venerable Bede, whose learning and veracity were never called in question, and who lived in the very next age after England had received the Christian faith, is one of the writers I speak of. So that whoever desires to be satisfied of the truth of the fact I insist upon needs but read his Ecclesiastical History of England in the third tome of his works; and he will find that the religion called Popery was planted in this island by St. Augustine and his companions; with a full account of its growth and establishment in the seventh century.

Besides, it is a known truth, that the *reformation* made the first change of religion in England, after its conversion. The consequence whereof is, that, as England knew no other religion than Popery immediately before the *reformation*, so it received that very religion from St. Austin. And this saint, who confirmed the doctrine he preached by unquestionable miracles, (which are related by holy Bede,) taught no other than the faith of the universal Christian Church at that time; which is a full demonstration that Popery was not beholden to the Adviser's Egyptian darkness for its establishment in the world, since that darkness came at least three hundred years too late.

But, 3dly, the Adviser has no less a man than Martin

Luther himself, with the whole college of *reforming* apostles, against him. For in the beginning of the *reformation*, their usual language was, "What do we care for the fathers?" And Luther was above all remarkable for it. "I care not a rush," says he, "if a thousand Austins, or a thousand Cyprians, stood against me." Tom. 2, fol. 344. "Neither do I concern myself what Ambrose, Austin, or councils say; — I know their opinions so well that I have declared against them." fol. 345. He speaks with the same contempt of St. Jerome: whence it is evident that he looked upon all these fathers as teachers of Papistical doctrine, and enemies to the *reformation*.

What pity is it, that the Friendly Adviser did not come time enough into the world to tell Martin Luther that his rejecting the fathers of the fourth and fifth century would spoil the most ingenious system that ever was invented, to make Popery pass for a novelty, brought into the Church in dark ages, far distant from the time of those fathers! For if so great a man as Luther stuck not to confess that Popery was taught by the most eminent saints and doctors in the very brightest and most learned ages of the Church, who will after that believe the Adviser's tale of a tub, that it came sneaking in many hundred years after, only by the means of a universal ignorance and Egyptian darkness? And therefore, the learned Mr. Napier, of whom I have already spoken, is to be highly commended for his sincerity in owning that Popery reigned universally in the very beginning of the fourth century. For this is speaking like a true disciple of the principal apostle of the *reformation*.

But, though there were none of these facts to disprove the Adviser's system, it would be fully confuted by the very improbability, nay, moral impossibility of the principal supposition whereon it is grounded, viz., that "a universal ignorance and stupidity," which he

calls an Egyptian darkness, "reigned in the world for the space of near six hundred years; that in all this time there were no persons eminent either for wit or learning; and that this gave the politic guides of Rome full opportunity to impose such opinions on the Church as might best serve their own ends, and made the world apt and easy to be abused with the most absurd and monstrous doctrines."

This is the Adviser's supposition, to support his system, expressed in his own words; which, though malicious in the highest degree, yet at the same time is so very extravagant that it moves my pity rather than anger. For we have here whole Christendom fairly divided into two classes of men, commonly known by the honorable titles of knaves and fools. The popes, with their ministers and agents, according to this charitable supposition, were all knaves, void of religion, honor, and conscience; and the rest of Christendom, both laity and clergy, were all fools and blockheads, led by the nose, and abused with the most absurd and monstrous doctrines. And all this lasted for the space of many hundred years!

A most stupendous imagination, and only fit for the learned inhabitants of Moorfields! It is true, indeed, some ages may produce more persons of a superior genius than others; and liberal arts and sciences may flourish more at one time than another; because most things have their ebbings and flowings in the sublunary world. But that ignorance and stupidity should become universal for many hundred years together, and the greatest part of mankind turned into mules and asses, ready saddled and bridled to be ridden by the popes just as they pleased, may pass, indeed, for a very dull poetical fiction, but never for a good theological argument against Popery.

What! were there neither schools, nor universities, nor libraries, in all the time of this pretended universal

ignorance and Egyptian darkness? Did the popes interdict all wit and learning under pain of excommunication? Or did parents, in compliance with his holiness, renounce their natural concern for their children, and oblige them to spend their youth in idleness or vice? For all this, or something very like it, must be supposed, to give any color of probability to the Adviser's system. All schools must have been suppressed, universities abolished, libraries destroyed, and wit and learning made state crimes against the pope. Nay, and there must have been a universal reform made amongst the bishops and pastors of the Church, by a positive law, that none but dunces and blockheads should be duly qualified for holy orders. And even this would not have fully answered the politic ends of Rome, unless we further suppose that all the princes of Europe had their eyes put out and arms tied, to render them incapable of seeing or opposing the absurd and monstrous doctrines wherewith they were abused by the politic guides of Rome.

How miserably low must the credit of a cause be sunk, when it stands in need of such nonsense to support it! I confess, unless I had quoted the Adviser's own words, it might have been reasonably suspected that I had trumped up a ridiculous hypothesis of my own, barely for the pleasure to confute it. 'Let us but place it in a true light, and consider the extravagance and weakness of it.

Popery was certainly in possession of the universal Church for many hundred years. Some account then was to be given how it came to be established. For, since it is a thing without example that any nation ever parted tamely with its ancient religion, if Popery was an intruder upon the ancient Church, how could it find means to establish itself without opposition, whilst men were in their right senses? And, if it met with opposition, this would have caused disturbances and schisms,

and these disturbances would have been recorded by the writers of the times in which they happened. Now here the difficulty begins to pinch, because no history can be produced of any disturbance or schism in the Church, occasioned by any man's teaching the discriminating doctrines of Popery; whereas, on the contrary, there never was a doctrine opposite to any branch of Popery started in the Church, but it met with a vigorous resistance in its very birth, and caused disorders which are related by historians,—as that of Berengarius, Wycliffe, John Huss, the Waldenses, and others. In order, therefore, to make Popery (though pretended to be a doctrine opposite to the ancient faith) come in without noise or resistance, our Friendly Adviser has no other expedient, to bring about this wonderful event, than to assert boldly that Christendom was under a general infatuation for many hundred years together; and so make Popery steal its way into the Church, unperceived and unopposed, in the midst of a thick darkness of universal ignorance and stupidity.

But the thickest darkness cannot hide the extravagance of this ridiculous fable. There are numberless historical facts that give it the lie. As, first, the many learned universities that flourished in those very ages of pretended darkness; amongst which, that of Paris, founded by Charlemagne, and that of Oxford, founded by King Alfred, were most famous. Secondly, the great number of ecclesiastical writers, whereof Bellarmine (de Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis) reckons up between two and three hundred in those very ages; and many of these were as eminent both for holiness and learning as any of the ancient writers. Thirdly, besides innumerable provincial and national synods, there were about ten general councils held between the 9th and 16th centuries, and some of them were more numerous than any that had been held before. Nor did they meet in cellars under ground, like clippers and coiners, but in

the face of the universal Church, attentive to every thing that was transacted in those august assemblies. Nay, and the histories of them are faithfully transmitted to us, without any mention of the least change made in the ancient faith of the Church. Fourthly, the long and warm disputes between the emperors and popes, concerning the privilege of investitures, which lasted some ages, and show that the popes were not arbitrary lords and masters, nor led all Christendom by the nose. And, lastly, (to omit many more historical facts for brevity's sake,) the Greek schism, which began in the 9th century, and was not ended till the Council of Florence, anno 1437; during which time, if the popes had made any false steps in point of doctrine, the sharp-sighted Greeks, who were continually upon the watch to lay hold of any advantage against the Latins, would undoubtedly have reproached them with it — since they even accused them of shaving their beards, eating hogs-flesh, and many other trivial matters.

Now these are demonstrative proofs, that Christendom was neither so stupidly ignorant as to be unable to discern absurd and monstrous innovations from the ancient doctrine, nor so sheepishly passive as to submit tamely to any yoke the popes should lay upon them. Whence I conclude that, since the Adviser's system is a flat contradiction both to history and common sense, it can do no prejudice to the argument I have handled in the preceding sections; which, unless some better answer be given to it, is a moral demonstration that "no Christian church, teaching a doctrine opposite to Popery, ever appeared in the world before it," and that, by consequence, the Church of Rome teaches no other than the ancient faith of the Church.

But some will say, it is improbable that any man should attempt to *reform* the faith of a Church, unless he were sure that some considerable errors had crept into it. I answer, that this, if it were true, would be

a good apology for Arius, Socinius, and other such *reformers*. But St. Paul was of another opinion. For he tells us expressly "that there must be heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest." 1 Cor. xi. 19. Let us then consider the character of the first and principal *reformer* of Popery, and judge from it whether the children of the *reformation* have any just reason to glory in such a father.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHARACTER OF THE CAPITAL REFORMER CONSIDERED.

SECTION I.

HE HAD NO ORDINARY MISSION.

The person I speak of is Martin Luther, the first discoverer of the pretended errors of the Church of Rome. For as to those that followed him, they had nothing to do but enter at the breach which he had made, and share with him in the plunder of their mother Church.

I pretend not, however, to concern myself in any particular manner with the church that takes its denomination from him, or consider Luther any otherwise than as head of the *reformation* in general. For the only end I promise to myself is, to show that a person of a scandalous character has not the true marks of a *reformer* of Christ's Church, — unless the word *reformer* be taken for synonymous with that of heretic; and I hope thereby to convince the reader that the Church of Rome may be uncorrupt, and free from errors, though Martin Luther thought fit to be of another opinion.

Let us now consider the character which a grave archbishop and primate of England has given of this

great apostle of the *reformation*. "In the beginning of the reformation," says Tillotson, (Serm. 25, p. 588,) "when antichrist sat securely in the quiet possession of his kingdom, Luther arose; a bold and rough man, but a fit wedge to cleave asunder so hard and knotty a block; and appeared stoutly against the gross errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome, and for a long time stood alone."

I shall make but two short remarks upon the bishop's words. First, he dignifies his hero with the titles of "a bold and rough man, and a fit wedge to cleave a hard and knotty block." Surely, these titles are not much becoming an apostolical man; and I fear the bishop will be thought to have had before his eyes the pattern of some famous gladiator, rather than a meek and humble preacher of the gospel. Secondly, the bishop has here owned a fact which may serve indeed to set off the intrepidity of his bold and rough man, who, as he tells us, "for a long time stood alone;" but the credit of the *reformation* must suffer by it. For it is but an odd argument to convince any man that Luther had the truth on his side, because the whole world was against him.

I imagine, indeed, the bishop did not fully reflect upon the consequences of this concession. For if Martin Luther for a long time stood alone, and had, by consequence, the whole Christian world against him, (which agrees exactly with his own *primo solus eram*) it follows plainly that he had no ordinary mission from any man upon earth. Because it is a thing contrary to all practice, and even common sense, that a man shall be commissioned to teach and preach a doctrine opposite to that of the church, or immediate superior, from whom he receives his commission. Does a king ever give commissions to his officers to levy forces against himself? Have judges their credentials to subvert the laws of the government under which they serve? Or will any man, for example, say that Mr. Wh——on

had, by virtue of his ordination, a power given him to teach a doctrine contrary to that of his mother church? Either, then, it was an irregularity in him to do so or not. If not, why were his writings condemned? Why was he expelled the university? If so, then Martin Luther was guilty of a much greater irregularity in preaching a doctrine in which he had the whole Church against him, and from which he could not, by consequence, have a commission for so doing. For Luther "for a long time stood alone."

In effect, when Luther first set out in quality of *reformer*, the Roman Catholic Church was spread over all the principal kingdoms of Europe, which were then in perfect communion with the bishop of Rome, and had been so from their conversion to Christianity, as I have already observed. They all acknowledged the pope for head of the Church, and professed no other religion than what goes now under the odious name of Popery. Mass was said in all the churches of Christendom. The real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the holy Eucharist, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the number of seven sacraments, (which are since *reformed* away into two,) were the universal belief. Praying for the souls departed, imploring the intercession of saints, and paying a due respect to their images and relics, were then practised in all places where Christianity was known. Nay, I defy any man to mark me out one single province, town, village, or even family, in Christendom, where the Protestant religion, either as now established by law in Great Britain, or as it is modelled by any of the late *reformed* churches, was publicly professed and practised when Martin Luther made his first appearance. For Luther "for a long time stood alone."

Now, besides the irregularity of a man's setting up a new religion of his own head, and without commission to empower him to do it, is it rational to judge that all Christendom was then, and had continued for many

hundred years, under a kind of lethargy or infatuation, and that but one single man, a private Austin friar, should start up all on a sudden in his right senses? Were there not, at that time, hundreds of bishops, doctors, and pastors, in the world, as learned and zealous for the purity of the Christian faith as Martin Luther? It is, therefore, very strange that he should either be the only man clear-sighted enough to detect the gross errors of Popery, or, if others were equally convinced of them, that he alone should have zeal enough to oppose them.

This argument has frequently been urged against the first broachers of heresies, who always pretended that the Church had fallen into errors; and it is but too plain that the *reformation* labors under this great prejudice, viz., that, whereas the true Church has, and can have, no other than Christ himself, and his blessed apostles commissioned by him, for its founders, the *reformation*, on the contrary, has this resemblance with all known heresies that were ever broached, that it has for its author a single private person, preaching and writing, not only without commission from any lawful superior, but even in direct opposition to all the Church authority that was then visibly extant upon earth. For Luther "for a long time stood alone."

The case, then, fairly and impartially stated, is this, viz., whether this one single man, without commission or authority from any lawful superior, was more to be depended upon, in the great cause of faith and religion, than the whole visible Church that was against him when he first took upon himself the title of *reformer?* I cannot but think that every impartial judge will decide it in the negative.

To set this matter in its clearest light, I shall put a case almost parallel to it. Suppose some private man in Great Britain should take upon him to run down the whole constitution, and tell the people that the king and parliament have no legislative power; that the

judges are a pack of fools and knaves, and understand nothing of the law; that no regard is to be had to the king's lieutenants, justices of the peace, or other subaltern officers; suppose, I say, extravagances of this nature, tending manifestly to the disturbance and subversion of the government, should be talked or written by any private man; I ask whether it would be rational to believe him, in opposition to the sense of the whole nation? No, surely; but, on the contrary, he would be either treated as a madman, or prosecuted as a disturber of the public peace; which, in all likelihood, would have been the fate of Martin Luther, had he not found the secret to shelter himself under the favor and protection of his sovereign, the duke of Saxony, by setting before him the sweet bait of filling his coffers with the revenues of the Church, and plunder of rich monasteries, — which was every where the first fruit of the *reformation*, as all the world knows.

But, to make now the application of the case supposed, — when the *reformation* was first thought of, the Roman Catholic Church was the only established Church of all the principal kingdoms and states of Europe. This Church was governed by the pope as head, each kingdom by its primate, and each particular diocess by its respective bishop and pastors under him; just as Great Britain is governed by king and council, lord-lieutenants, justices of peace, &c. The Scriptures, canons, and decrees of councils, were the law according to which the Church was governed both in her faith and discipline. She had then prescription, for what is now called Popery, of many hundred years, as is acknowledged by the most eminent Protestants. All the bishops, divines, and learned men of Europe, and many other parts of the world, were united in the same faith, and believed themselves to be in the bosom of the true Church. Martin Luther alone, a private Austin friar, starts up, and tells the world that this whole Church was tainted with many gross errors; that

himself was the only true interpreter of Scriptures; that the canons and decrees of councils signified nothing; that the pope was antichrist, and all the bishops, doctors, and divines, were no better than a parcel of blockheads and impostors. For this was the main scope of all his *reforming* writings. I speak modestly; for, according to his usual good manners, he calls them all calves and asses. Nay, the very fathers of the Church, those great lights and ornaments of the Christian faith, were treated no better by him; and Dr. Tillotson had all the reason in the world to call him "a bold and rough man, and a fit wedge to cleave a knotty block."

But, to conclude the parallel, I have but this one question to ask: Whether it was more rational to believe this single man, in opposition to the concurring faith and authority of the universal Church, than it would be now to believe a single factious fellow against the sense and judgment of the whole nation? For if this cannot be judged rational, as surely it cannot, then the doctrine of the *reformation* appears manifestly unsound in its very head and source; and time, which cannot change the nature of things, nor turn falsehood into truth, has not in the least bettered its cause.

I shall here take the freedom to demand a thing, wherein if any Protestant can but give me some tolerable satisfaction, I will not only give up this whole chapter relating to Luther, but likewise own that a *reformer of the Church's faith* and a *heretic* are not synonymous terms. I question not but every Protestant will grant that there have been heretics in the world; and I shall mention one, of whose just claim to that title no true Protestant can doubt. I mean Arius, who denied the consubstantiality of the Son; and, though he pretended to have plain Scripture for his doctrine, (as these words of Christ, "my Father is greater than I,") this hindered not his being condemned for a heretic by the great Council of Nice. And, indeed, he had all the

marks of one; as, broaching a doctrine contrary to the faith of the whole visible Church of Christ in being; preaching without a commission from her; appealing from her authority to the dead letter of Scriptures, and making his own private judgment the sole interpreter of it; in a word, an invincible obstinacy, even after sentence juridically pronounced against him, first by his immediate superior and afterwards by the supreme tribunal of the Church. These are the usual marks of what we call an arch-heretic, and were undoubtedly very notorious in Arius.

Now the thing I demand is precisely this, viz., some satisfactory reason why Arius was a heretic any more than Luther; or (which amounts to the same) that some proper and distinguishing mark of a heretic may be found to belong to Arius which cannot be appropriated to Martin Luther. Whoever can perform this will do the *reformation* a signal piece of service. But if it cannot be done, (and I fear the task will prove somewhat hard,) then it follows that the respective churches founded by Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, &c., are all heretical churches like the Arians, and no part of the Church of Christ.

If any one be so weak as to say that the great difference between Arius and Luther is, that Arius opposed the doctrine of the Church when she was pure, but Luther rose up against her when she was *corrupt* in her doctrine, I shall only answer him, that this is begging the question instead of proving, and the followers of Arius will say just the same in defence of their masters, and plain Scripture will be pretended for it. So that, if nothing can be produced to distinguish Luther's behavior towards his mother Church from that of Arius, — if they be found to sympathize in all the proper and characteristic marks of what we commonly mean by a true and stanch heretic, — we cannot judge otherwise than that either both must be absolved or both condemned.

However, if Martin Luther may be allowed to be a judge in his own cause, he has not been wanting to himself in pronouncing sentence in favor of his new doctrine; though not altogether with the modesty of an evangelical preacher. His own words shall be the best proof of what I say. Tom. 2, fol. 333, 1, (against Henry VIII of England.) "I am certain," says he, "I have my doctrine from heaven; it shall stand, and the pope shall fall, in spite of all the gates of hell, and the powers of the air, the earth, and sea."

I should be glad to know whether that part of his doctrine was from heaven which he learned in the colloquy he had with the devil, related at large by himself.

Again, (Tom. 7, fol. 274;) "I was the first to whom God vouchsafed to reveal the things which have been preached to you; and certain I am that you have the pure word of God."

N. B. That, if Martin Luther was the first to whom God vouchsafed to reveal the things which he preached, it follows that the apostles never knew nor preached his doctrine; which makes me fear his works will never pass for canonical Scripture, or the revealed Word of God, though we have his own word for it. But what follows is a very extraordinary piece, and will certainly very much edify the reader.

"I, Martin Luther, by the grace of God, ecclesiastes in Wittemberg, to the Popish bishops, grace and peace. This title I now assume, with the utmost contempt of you and Satan, that you may not plead ignorance. And should I style myself an evangelist by the grace of God, I could sooner prove my claim to this title than you to that of bishop. For I am certain that Christ himself calls me so, and looks upon me as an ecclesiastes. He is that master of my doctrine. Neither doubt I but, in the great day of accounts, he will be my witness that this doctrine is not mine, but the doctrine of God, of the spirit of the Lord, and of the pure and sincere gospel.

"So that should you kill me, ye bloodsuckers, yet you will never extinguish either me, or my name, or my doctrine, unless Christ be not living. Since now I am certain that I teach the Word of God, it is not fit I should want a title for the recommending of this word, and work of the ministry to which I am called by God; which I have not received of men, nor by men, but by the gift of God, and revelation of Jesus Christ. And now I declare beforehand, that, for the time to come, I will not honor you so far as to condescend to submit myself or my doctrine to your judgment, or to that of an angel from heaven." Tom. 2, fol. 305, 2.

Here we have a piece of insolence and arrogance never to be paralleled, nay, even to a degree of frenzy and madness. We see here a miserable wretch flying in the face of superiors, trampling upon authority, and even assuming to himself that infallibility which he would not allow to the Church of Christ. But God, who resists the proud, confounded his arrogance, by permitting him to fall, not only into the most impious absurdities in point of doctrine, as will appear hereafter, but even scandalous irregularities in practice. For, though it cost him nothing to mimic the style of a Paul, he could never attain the strength of a Paul to resist the buffets of Satan. His marriage, doubly sacrilegious by engaging a person consecrated to God in the same crime, betrayed a weakness of so scandalous a nature as not only gave great offence to his friend Melancthon (L. 4, Epist. 24) and the sober part of his new *reformed* church, but will be an everlasting mark of dishonor to the *reformation*, and a convincing proof that the hand of God had no part in it. For, if the tree may be known by its fruit, and the man by his works, we may justly conclude, that the world, the flesh, and the devil, were far more prevalent in this pretended reformer than the spirit of God.

Was it by divine inspiration that he lived at open defiance of all ecclesiastical authority? Was it by

divine inspiration that he broke vows, threw off his religious habit, and with it all the duties of a religious state, to which he had consecrated himself for life? Finally, was it by the impulse of the Holy Ghost that he indulged himself in wantonness, when he should have been singing the divine office, as the rule of his order required of him? I know not whether these be proper marks of an apostolical spirit and a man called by Christ to the work of the ministry; but I am sure they are marks of a very fresh date, and wholly unknown to antiquity. For we read, indeed, of the apostles who were married before their vocation to the apostleship, that they left their wives to follow Christ; and many other apostolical men have done the same, after their example. But it is to Luther's *reformation* alone we owe those excellent patterns of persons breaking through the most sacred engagements of holy orders, and religious vows, to become fathers of children, not altogether in a spiritual way, and very different from that of the apostles of the Gentiles, who begot the Corinthians, and many other spiritual children in Jesus Christ, through the gospels. (Cor. iv. 15.)

It seems, however, that Martin Luther found it, if not more edifying, at least more comfortable to join the state of matrimony with his apostolical labors, and call Kate Boren to his assistance in the work of the ministry. For I question not but her good example brought in a plentiful harvest of female converts; and, as to Luther's practice, it was but a natural consequence to his doctrine. The one prepared the way for the other. For to what end did he preach down celibacy, and vows of chastity, if he had intended to keep them? He was not ignorant that marriage of priests was forbidden by the established laws of the Church, and breaking vows by the laws of God; but flesh and blood prevailed. The charms of liberty and a female companion gave him wonderful lights into matters of

religion, and made him discover errors unseen before. Without these extraordinary helps, to quicken his zeal, and spur him on to undertake the glorious work of the *reformation*, he might have continued a private monk till death, and as utter a stranger to all popish *errors* as when he first made his solemn vows. It is certain, however, that his preaching, as he did, without a mission from any lawful superior; an essential flaw in every thing he taught contrary to the doctrine of his mother Church, entitles him to no better character than that of a hardened apostate, and one abandoned by God to be a scourge to his Church, and the instrument of his secret but just judgment on those whom he seduced.

SECTION II.

LUTHER HAD NO EXTRAORDINARY MISSION.

When God raises men in an extraordinary manner, as he did the prophets and apostles, he never fails to qualify them accordingly; and all those who had their mission immediately from him were manifestly guided by his spirit. The virtues that shined in their actions, and the miracles they wrought, were their credentials; and it was impossible to see their works, without being convinced of the truth of their words.

This may likewise be said of the great reformers of manners, whom God has raised from time to time to repair the gradual decays of Christian morality, — as St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Dominick, St. Francis, St. Ignatius, and other holy founders of religious orders. They were all powerful in works and words. They prepared themselves for the great work of the conversion of sinners by retirement, prayer, fasting,

mortification of their senses, and an entire contempt of the world. And, what is very remarkable in the lives of these great men, they never made a step but with obedience and submission to their lawful superior. Meekness and humility, two virtues peculiarly recommended by Christ, were the most distinguishing parts of their character; and even their greatest enemies could never reproach them with any one irregular practice.

But, alas! how far is Martin Luther, the founder of the *reformation*, from coming up to the least part of this noble character! He pretends to have had his mission immediately from God. But must we take his own bare words for it? Where are his credentials? What miracles has he wrought? What extraordinary virtues can he show, to convince us of the truth of what he says? I have already discovered some considerable flaws both in his principles and practice, which are no marks of an extraordinary call. However, allowing these to be but after-slips of human frailty, if he was really called to the ministry of the gospel immediately by God himself, the least we can suppose is, that God infused into him the proper previous dispositions to fit him for so high a station, and, above all, inspired him with a most ardent love of him; this being a quality inseparable from a true zeal for the service of his holy Church. But, to prevent our falling into this mistaken good opinion of him, Luther himself has taken care to inform us of the true state of his soul the year before he set up his separate communion. "Out of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant." Luke xix. 22.

For, in the preface to his first tome, (p. 6,) he tells us how his soul was at that time affected towards God. "I was mighty desirous," says he, "to understand Paul in his epistle to the Romans; but was hitherto deterred, not by any faint-heartedness, but by one single expression in the first chapter, viz., "Therein is the righteous-

ness of God revealed." For I hated that word, "the righteousness of God," because I had been taught to understand it of that formal and active righteousness, by which God is righteous, and punishes sinners and the unrighteous. Now knowing myself, though I lived a monk of an irreproachable life, to be in the sight of God a sinner, and a most unquiet conscience, nor having any hopes to appease him with my own satisfaction, I did not love, nay, I hated this righteous God, who punishes sinners; and with heavy muttering, if not with silent blasphemy, I was angry with God, and said, 'As if it were not enough for miserable sinners, who are lost to all eternity by original sin, to suffer all manner of calamity by the law of the decalogue, unless God by the gospel adds sorrow to sorrow, and, even by the gospel, threatens us with his righteousness and anger!' Thus did I rage with a fretted and disordered conscience."

Blessed God! what a disposition is here to prepare a man for the ministry of the gospel, the preaching of the pure Word of God, and the reformation of Christ's Church! What strange marks are these of an extraordinary call! A man, raging with a fretted and disordered conscience, angry with God, murmuring against him, nay, hating, and silently blaspheming his justice for punishing sinners! How can we represent the very damned souls in hell in blacker colors? For the very worst we can say of them is, that they hate, curse, and blaspheme God's justice for punishing their past crimes. Because to hate any of God's attributes is to hate God himself; and the very thought of hating God carries horror with it.

How happy is the Church of Rome in having such an accuser! The infamy of the evidence is her full justification, and a convincing proof that the spirit of God had no part in a work wherein Martin Luther was a principal actor. If a man who, by his own confession, hated and blasphemed God, is to be depended on in the

great concern of religion, — and that, upon the credit of his having been divinely inspired, and called in an extraordinary manner, — then let the Church of Rome be thought guilty of the errors whereof he has accused her.

But we have hitherto seen but one part of his true picture. He has been so just to posterity as to leave it drawn at full length in his own writings. Let us then take a full view of him, and, when we have considered him attentively, judge whether he bears the least resemblance of a man divinely inspired, and commissioned immediately, by Christ to reform his Church.

The passages I have made use of are all taken out of his works, printed at Wittemberg — the first tome, anno 1582, the second, 1562, the third, 1583, the fourth, 1574, the fifth, 1554, the sixth, 1580, the seventh, 1558. And all these have, at the beginning, Martin Luther and his protector, the duke of Saxony, represented at their prayers before a crucifix. If any Protestant can convict me of unfair dealing in my quotations, I shall be ready to make any public reparation that shall be demanded of me.

SECTION III.

HIS SCURRILITY AND RAILING.

Tom. 7, fol. 452, 3. We are furnished with a specimen of scurrilous language not at all becoming an inspired man, or apostolical preacher of the gospel. It is by way of dialogue between Luther and Pope Paul.

"*Luther.* Gently, my dear little Paul; have a care, my ass, of stumbling. Have a care, my pope-ass. Go no further, my dear little ass, lest thou should fall, and break a leg. For there has been this year so little

wind abroad that the ice is mighty slippery. And if, unhappily, as thou art falling, thou shouldst let fly behind, all the world would laugh at thee, and say, 'What the devil is the matter here? How the pope-ass has b——t himself!'

"*Pope.* Hold thy peace, thou heretic. Whatever falls from our mouth is to be kept.

"*Luther.* I hear. But what mouth dost thou mean? Is it that, by which thou art wont to send thy farts? Those thou mayest keep to thyself. Or dost thou mean that other mouth, with which thou guzzlest thy costly wine? May it still fall into that dog's paunch of thy own!

"*Pope.* Away, thou wicked Luther! Dost thou talk thus to the pope?

"*Luther.* Away, I say, you wicked, desperate rascals, and blockish asses! [Speaking to the pope and his cardinals.] Why! can you imagine yourselves to be any better than so many great blockish asses and fools? Truly, pope-ass, a blockish ass thou art, and an ass thou wilt ever be."

Again, (fol. 474, 1;) "Well! Were I master of the empire, I would order all those profligate rogues,—the pope and cardinals, and their families,—to be fagotted up together, and carried to Ostia, three miles from Rome, where there is a puddle called by the Latins the Tyrrhean sea. It is a bath of wonderful virtue against all diseases and infirmities of the papal sanctity. In this bath I would gently dip them; and, if they stayed there but half an hour, I would engage my word, nay, my Lord's Christ's too, they should be cured of all their distemper."

Are not these two master-pieces of inoffensive raillery? The touches are so very gentle,—as, "desperate rascals," "great blockish simple asses," "profligate rogues," &c.; and the turns so very fine,—as that of "the pope's mouth before and behind,"—that the reader cannot but be

delighted, as well as edified, with so much good humor and good manners.

However, as there are different tastes, and some, perhaps, will not relish this way of outlandish raillery, which we call buffoonery in England, I can assure them this was not Luther's chief talent: but no man ever outdid him at downright railing. And, to be convinced of this truth, let us see how popes, cardinals, and crowned heads, were treated by him.

Tom. 7, fol. 451, 2. "The pope and his cardinals are a company of desperate, profligate rogues and rascals; traitors, liars, and the very sink of the wickedest men living. They are full of the worst of devils that are to be found in hell: full, full, I say; and so full that they do nothing but spit, shite, and blow devils through their nostrils."

Against Henry, king of England, (Tom. 2, fol. 331, 2.) "This doting, illiterate beast of the papistical body slavers and praters about my flight."

Fol. 333, 1. "It is hard to say whether madness, or folly itself, be so mad and foolish as Harry's head.—— He blurts out every thing, not with a royal mind, but with a whorish impudence. — What is this Harry, this upstart Thomist, that I must honor his virulent blasphemy?"

Fol. 334, 2. "To be sure, Luther must be frightened when the king in this book spends so much of Thomistical spittle in lies and prating! — I speak to a lying scoundrel. — If the fool of a king can so forget his royal majesty, why should it not become me to thrust back his lies into his own throat?"

Fol. 336. "Thus does this brainsick king dispute, most admirably, most Thomistically, most Henristically."

Fol. 337, 1. "This trifling, impertinent king."

Fol. 339, 1. "Why, Harry, dost thou not blush? Thou a king? No, a sacrilegious thief!"

Fol. 340, 1. "This Thomistical tup! This block-head! Thou liest, thou sacrilegious and foolish king!"

Fol. 341, 1. "Thus does this raving king splutter."

Fol. 341, 1. "This immovable blockhead; Henry, with his hogs and asses," &c.

All this is what we call plain English, and needs no comment. But we may safely say, this sort of language never descended with the fiery tongues in the Acts, but comes rather from the tongue St. James speaks of, which "is set on fire by hell." Yet to this tongue the *reformation* principally owes its birth and being. This was the shrill trumpet which sounded the first charge against the Church of Rome. This roused the Christian world out of a lethargy supposed to have lasted many hundred years, and opened the eyes of thousands to make them see errors which otherwise they never would have dreamed of. A wonderful instrument of such a mercy! This, finally, made nuns and friars sally out of their solitary cells, and listen to more charming summons than the melancholy sound of their matin-bell. For their great apostle took care to convince them of the impossibility of living single, by words as well as example. Let us hear his admirable doctrine upon this subject.

SECTION IV.

HIS DOCTRINE CONCERNING CELIBACY AND CONJUGAL FIDELITY.

Edict. ad Wolfangum, Tom. 7, fol. 505, 1. "God declares that he will have no man live unmarried, but to be multiplied.—If any man resolves to continue unmarried, let him put off the name of man, and make

it appear that he is an angel or a spirit; for to man God does not allow it by any means."

Again, Serm. de Matrim, (Tom. 5, fol. 119, 1:) "'Increase and multiply,' is not a precept, but more than a precept; that is to say, a divine work. — Which is as necessary as to be a man, and more necessary than to eat, drink, sleep, or wake. — As it is not in my power not to be a man, so it is not in my choice to be without a woman. And again, as it is not in thy power not to be a woman, so it is not in thy choice to live without a man."

All bachelors and maids must here vindicate themselves from the scandal of lewdness as well as they can; for Martin Luther has left them but one way to do it, viz., by proving themselves to be angels, and that they can live without eating, drinking, sleeping, or waking. This, I presume, is some part of that doctrine which, as he has already told us, "God never revealed to any man before himself." But, lest either bachelors or maids should be deterred from matrimony with the apprehensions that their wives or husbands should grow weary of them, Dr. Luther has administered consolation to all his *reformed* brethren and sisters in the following words:

"What if one of the married couple should refuse to be reconciled to the other, and would absolutely live separate; and the other, not being able to contain, should be forced to seek another comfort; what must be done? May he contract with another? I answer that, without doubt, he may." In 1 Cor. vii. Tom. 5, 3, 2.

"Put the case, that one should fly from the other, till there has been a third or fourth marriage; might the husband marry another wife as often as his former left him, so as to have ten or more of these deserters still alive? Again, may the wife have ten or more husbands, who are all fled? I answer, that we cannot stop St. Paul's mouth, nor contend with such as think fit to make use of his doctrine, as often as need

requires. His words are plain — 'that a brother or sister are free from the law of marriage, if one of them departs, or will not consent to live with the other.'" Fol. 112, 2.

"It is fit the husband should say, 'If thou wilt not, another will: if the mistress refuses, let the maid come.' But first he should a second and third time admonish his wife, and before others make known her obstinacy, that she may be publicly reprehended. If after this she refuses, divorce her and advance Esther in the place of Vasthi." Fol. 123, 1.

A man must be wholly void of sense not to judge that this is pure, good doctrine. What an ease of conscience must it needs be, to persons engaged in wedlock, to have an inspired man for their interpreter of St. Paul in so nice a point! But how could Martin Luther get clear of that cloud of venerable witnesses, — I mean the ancient fathers, — who had not only written whole volumes in praise of virginity, but were against him in every article wherein he contradicted his mother Church? This, indeed, was a hard and knotty block; but Luther was a fit wedge to cleave it asunder. For though the writings of the ancient fathers had till then been held in veneration, and received as oracles by the whole Christian Church, our "bold rough man" — as the archbishop styles him — thought fit to use them without ceremony, as we shall see in the following quotations.

SECTION V.

HIS CONTEMPT OF THE ANCIENT FATHERS.

Lib. de Serv. Arb. Tom. 2, fol. 480, 2. "To what purpose should any man rely on the ancient fathers,

whose authority was revered for so many ages? For were not they too all blind; and even neglected Paul's clearest and most obvious words? Brag now of the authority of the ancients, and depend on what they say, when, as you see, every man of them neglected Paul — the brightest and most intelligible doctor, — and were so deeply plunged into carnal sense, as kept them in a manner designedly at a distance from this morning star, or rather from this sun."

"St. Jerome, being imposed upon by Origen, understood not a syllable of Paul." Tom. 5, fol. 348, 1.

"These Thomistical asses have nothing to produce but a multitude of men and the ancient practice, nor have any thing to say, when I quote the Scriptures, but, 'Are you the only man of sense?' The Word of God is above all. The divine majesty is for me — so that I care not a rush if a thousand Austins, or a thousand Cyprians, stood against me." Cent. Reg. Ang. Tom. 2, fol. 344, 2.

"Had Austin, in plain terms, asserted that there is a power in the Church to make laws, what is Austin? Who shall oblige us to believe him? If then so great an error, and such a sacrilege, prevailed against the Word of God for so long a time, with the consent, or submission, or approbation, of all mankind, let them consider if there be not good reason, why God would have no creature to be credited." Fol. 345, 1.

"Neither do I concern myself what Ambrose, Austin, the councils, or practice of ages, say. Nor do I want King Harry to be my master in this point. I know their opinions so well, that I have declared against them." Fol. 347, 1.

Well said, Martin Luther! He has here given such a mortal stab, both to himself and his *reformed* churches, that they can never recover of it in the judgment of any thinking man. For it is plainly owning that the *reformation* was the product of his own brain; the fruit of arrogance and self-conceit; and that not only the

whole Church then in being, but fathers, councils, and practice of ages, were against him — which, in effect, is giving up the case. St. Cyprian flourished in the third century, St. Ambrose in the fourth, and St. Jerome and St. Austin in the fourth and fifth. So that Luther, by mentioning and treating them as adversaries, has left Protestants no other choice than one of these two things, viz., either to own that he *reformed* the religion handed down from the apostles themselves, or that the Popery *reformed* by him was introduced into the Church some time or other between the death of the apostles and the lives of those ancient fathers — which, I believe, no Protestant will be so foolhardy as to attempt to prove. I shall now present the reader with a few more touches of his admirable morals under the following heads.

SECTION VI.

HIS DOCTRINE CONCERNING FREE-WILL, REPENTANCE, AND GOOD WORKS.

"If God foresaw," says he, "that Judas would be a traitor, Judas of necessity became a traitor. Neither was it in the power of Judas, or of any other creature, to do otherwise, or to change his will." De Servo Arb. Tom. 2, fol. 460, 2.

"This is the highest degree of faith — to believe God to be just, though, by his own will, he lays us under a necessity of being damned, and in such a manner, too, as if he took delight in tormenting the miserable." Fol. 434, 1.

"'Thou shalt not covet,' is a commandment which proves us all to be sinners; since it is not in any man's

power not to covet. And the same is the drift of all the commandments, for they are all equally impossible to us." De Lib. Chris. Tom. 4, 2.

Here God, the Father of mercies, is represented as a merciless and arbitrary tyrant, commanding things which we have it not in our power to perform, and punishing the non-performance with eternal torments.

"Free-will, after sin, is no more than an empty name; and, when it does its best, sins mortally." Adversus Execrat. Anti. Bullam. Tom. 2, fol. 3, 2.

"Man's will is in the nature of a horse. If God sits upon it, it tends and goes as God would have it go; if the devil rides it, it tends and goes as the devil would have it. Nor can it choose which of the riders it will run to or seek. But the riders themselves strive who shall gain and possess it." De Ser. Arb. Tom. 2, fol. 434, 2.

This doctrine paves the way to, and is an apology for, any wickedness whatsoever; because necessity has no law. But what follows makes large amends for it, in delivering us, not only from the yoke of repentance and good works, but from eternal damnation for any sins but infidelity. So that a man may be the most profligate sinner upon earth, and yet be in the state of salvation, if he does but believe.

"A person," says he, "that is baptized, cannot, though he would, lose his salvation by any sins how grievous soever, unless he refuses to believe. For no sins can damn him but unbelief alone." Capt. Bab. Tom. 2, fol. 74, 1.

"The contrition with which a man reflects upon his past years, in the bitterness of his soul, by considering the grievousness, the damage and baseness, the multitude, of his sins, and then the loss of eternal happiness, and the incurring eternal damnation, makes him a hypocrite, and even the greater sinner." Serm. de Pœnit. Tom. 1, fol. 50, 2.

"The Papists teach, that faith in Christ justifies in-

deed, but that God's commandments are likewise to be kept. Now this is directly to deny Christ, and abolish faith." In Ep. ad Gal. Tom. 5, fol. 311, 2.

A man must be very wicked, indeed, to turn Papist, since they teach that God's commandments are to be kept. What follows is admirable.

"Let this be your rule: where the Scripture commands the doing a good work, understand it in this sense, that it forbids thee to do a good work because thou canst not do it." Tom. 3, fol. 171, 2.

This certainly is a most golden rule, to interpret the Scriptures backwards — not to do what they command, and to do what they forbid. Martin Luther was, without all dispute, the first to whom this rule was revealed. And I presume he had it in view, when, contrary to the express Word of God, he denied all legislative power in men.

SECTION VII.

HIS DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE LEGISLATIVE POWER.

"NEITHER pope, nor bishop, nor any man living, has a right to impose one syllable upon any Christian, unless he gives his consent. And whatsoever is done to the contrary, is by the spirit of tyranny." Cap. Bab. Tom. 2, fol. 76, 2.

"The power of making laws belongs to God alone." Contra Reg. Ang. Tom. 2, fol. 346, 1.

This is *reforming* both Church and State with a witness, by purging the one as well as the other of all its laws, which, as to discipline in the Church, and order of government in the state, were all made by men, who,

according to Luther's gospel, have no legislative power. But these, perhaps, were all involuntary mistakes, which (though it derogates very much from the credit of his being inspired) are no reflection upon his sincerity. But the following pieces will show how great a lover he was of truth when he was convinced of it, and what pains he took to find it.

SECTION VIII.

LUTHER NO SLAVE TO TRUTH.

Epist. ad Amicos Argent. Tom. 7, fol. 502, 1. "If Carlostadius, or any man else, could, five years ago, have convinced me that in the sacrament there is nothing but bread and wine, he had wonderfully obliged me; for, with great anxiety, did I examine this point, and labor with all my force to get clear of the difficulty. [Mark well the reason why he took so much pains.] Because by this means I knew very well I should terribly incommode the Papacy. But I find I am catched without hopes of escaping. For the text of the gospel is so clear and strong that it will not easily admit of a misconstruction."

Poor man! What a hardship it was upon him, that he should be forced to own the truth, when he had so good an inclination to deny it! But why did he not spell the gospel backwards, according to his own rule, and declare that these words of Christ, "This is my body, this is my blood," signify the same as "This is not my body, this is not my blood"? For this would have done his business with the greatest ease imaginable.

But I assure the reader, he will find him more

resolute in the following piece; for there, to be revenged of the pope, he stoutly gives himself the lie, and repents of having come too near the truth in his former writings.

Adversus Execrab. Anti. Bullam. Tom. 2, fol. 109, 1 "Whereas I said that some of John Huss's articles were evangelical, this I retract. And now I say, not that some, but all John Huss's articles were condemned at Constance by antichrist, and his apostles in that synagogue of Satan. And I tell thee plainly to thy face, most holy vicar of God, that all the condemned propositions of John Huss are evangelical and Christian, and that all thine are wholly impious and diabolical. Therefore, as to the condemned articles of John Huss, I maintain them all, and am ready, by the grace of God, to defend them."

N. B. That one of John Huss's *evangelical* articles, which he had learned of his master Wycliffe, was this, viz.: "That the committing a mortal sin made kings and bishops forfeit their power and character;" which doctrine introduces anarchy both into Church and state.

I am sorry I have been forced to foul my paper with so much ribaldry. But I thought it necessary, in order to convince the reader of two things: first, that I have not wronged the person who gave birth to the *reformation*, in any thing I have said of him; and, secondly, that a person so violent and brutal in his temper, on the one hand, and, on the other, guilty of such scandalous, nay, even impious and blasphemous doctrine, cannot be looked upon as an inspired man, or raised immediately by God to reform his Church. Those whom Almighty God has almost in all ages chosen, as peculiar instruments of his mercy, have ever appeared in the world, not only with a clear character, but with the most evident marks of the Divine Spirit residing in their hearts, and speaking by their mouths. A meek and humble zeal appeared in all their works, and every

word they spoke hath truth stamped upon it. Luther, therefore, was not of this heavenly race; nor could his mission be immediately from God who had the character of the beast impressed on every feature. And since it is likewise manifest that he had no ordinary mission from any man upon earth, the consequence is, that whatever he preached in opposition to his mother Church was a doctrine either borrowed from old condemned heretics or hammered out in his own brain. And so we can regard him no otherwise than as an instrument of divine justice, and one of those great scourges which God makes use of, from time to time, and permits to prosper in their wickedness, both to try and purify the faith of the elect, and accomplish his just judgments on reprobate sinners.

If any one asks me, whether all the extravagant and scandalous opinions of Luther, or other *reformers*, are to be charged upon any particular *reformed* church, or the whole *reformation*, I answer, to the first, that neither the Lutheran, nor any other particular *reformed* church, can justly be charged with any proposition which they disavow and condemn — as, I presume, they all do the grosser part of the errors scattered up and down in their writings. As, for instance, if a Lutheran, or preacher of any sect, should now presume to maintain, in any government whatsoever, "that the power of making laws belongs to God alone," I believe a collar of hemp would soon put a stop to such seditious doctrine. Or if a preacher should now tell the British wives that they may lawfully have "ten or more husbands living at once," or the young man, "that it is impossible for him to live without a maid," I fancy such a preacher, though he should quote Paul for his author, as Luther did, would not be long without having his canonical gown turned over his head.

I answer to the second, that even the *reformation*, in general, cannot justly be charged with the scandalous doctrine of any particular *reformer*, provided that all the

reformed churches disown this principle, viz., "that the rule of faith is Scripture as interpreted by a man of sound judgment." For, if they stand to that principle, they are all equally accountable for every thing taught by their *reformers*, even when they contradict one another; because they surely look upon them as men who were not only of sound judgment, but great learning. All opinions, therefore, though ever so extravagant or impious, if supported by the fore-mentioned principle, are properly the doctrine of the *reformation*, unless that principle be utterly disowned. Because, whatever follows clearly from an avowed principle of a party may justly be charged upon the whole party; as, whatever follows clearly from any principle maintained by the Church of Rome may properly be called her doctrine. But if the *reformed* churches disown that principle, and, instead of it, make the revealed Word of God, as interpreted by the Church, the rule of their faith, there will be no danger of their accounting for the scandalous doctrine either of Martin Luther or his fellow *reformers;* but then the *reformation* loses its best support.

But I shall waive all further remarks relating to this matter, as being foreign to my present purpose. For I am wholly upon the defence of my own Church, and have had no other view, in exposing the irregular conduct and extravagant principles of Martin Luther, than to invalidate the testimony of a man who has appeared as a principal evidence against the Church whose cause I espouse. Luther was the first informer against her, "and for a long time stood alone." Tillot. Those who followed him only built upon the foundation which he had laid; though they could not agree with their architect about the manner of the superstructure, but, like the builders of Babel, were divided in their tongues.

If, therefore, I have clearly shown that this great informer against the Church of Rome is not *rectus in curia*, that he is no legal evidence, but a scandal to his

cause, I hope it will be of some use to remove the general prepossession against the doctrine of that Church, and serve, as a collateral proof, to convince impartial readers that the errors charged upon the Church of Rome are all imaginary and fictitious; and then the positive proofs of her infallibility, being considered without prejudice, will lose nothing of their weight; as they will most certainly do upon persons strongly prejudiced and prepossessed against it.

I shall here add the copy of a printed paper I casually met with. For, as we have now seen by what hands the first foundation of the *reformation* in general was laid, so will this piece inform us who were the three principal authors of the particular *reformation* in Great Britain, and what motives induced them to it. The piece I mean is the Declaration of the duchess of York, occasioned by her conversion to the Roman Catholic faith, and published in the year 1670.

THE DECLARATION OF THE DUCHESS OF YORK, CONCERNING THE OCCASION AND MOTIVES OF HER CONVERSION.

"It is so reasonable to expect that a person always bred up in the Church of England, and as well instructed in the doctrine of it as the best divines and her capacity could make her, should be liable to many censures for leaving that, and making herself a member of the Roman Catholic Church, (to which, I confess, I was one of the greatest enemies it ever had,) that I choose rather to endeavor to satisfy my friends by reading this paper than to have the trouble to answer all the questions that may daily be asked me. And first, I do profess, in the presence of Almighty God, that no person, man or woman, directly or indirectly, ever said

any thing to me, (since I came into England,) or used the least endeavor to make me change my religion. It is a blessing I wholly owe to Almighty God, and, I hope, the hearing of a prayer I daily made him, ever since I was in France and Flanders, where, seeing much of the devotion of the Catholics, (though I had very little myself,) I made it my continual request to Almighty God, that, if I were not, I might, before I died, be in the true religion. I did not in the least doubt but that I was so, and never had any manner of scruple till November last, when reading a book called, 'The History of the Reformation,' by Dr. Heylin, which I had heard very much commended, and had been told if ever I had any doubt in my religion, that would settle me; instead of which, I found it the description of the most horrid sacrileges in the world, and could find no reason why we left the Church, but for three of the most abominable ones that were ever heard of amongst Christians. First, Henry VIII. renounces the pope's authority, because he would not give him leave to part with his wife, and marry another, in her life-time. Secondly, Edward VI. was a child, and governed by his uncle, who made his estate out of Church lands.

"And then Queen Elizabeth, who, being no lawful heiress to the crown, could have no way to keep it, but by renouncing a Church that could never suffer so unlawful a thing to be done by one of her children. I confess, I cannot think the Holy Ghost could ever be in such councils; and it is very strange that, if the bishops had no design but (as they say) the restoring us to the doctrine of the primitive Church, they should never think of it till Henry VIII. made the breach, upon so unlawful a pretence. These scruples being raised, I began to consider of the differences between the Catholics and us; and examined them as well as I could by the Holy Scriptures, which, though I do not pretend to be able to understand, yet there are some things I found so easy, that I cannot but wonder I had been so long

without finding them out — as the real presence in the blessed sacrament, the infallibility of the Church, confession, and praying for the dead. After this, I spoke severally to two of the best bishops * we have in England, who both told me there were many things in the Roman Church which it were very much to be wished we had kept, as confession, which was, no doubt, commanded by God; that praying for the dead was one of the ancient things in Christianity; that, for their parts, they did it daily, though they would not own it. And, afterwards, pressing one of them very much upon the other points, he † told me that, if he had been bred a Catholic, he would not change his religion, but that, being of another church, wherein he was sure were all things necessary to salvation, he thought it very ill to give that scandal as to leave that church wherein he had received his baptism.

"All these discourses did but add more to the desire I had to be a Catholic, and gave me the most terrible agonies in the world, within myself. For all this, fearing to be rash in a matter of that weight, I did all I could to satisfy myself; made it my daily prayer to God to settle me in the right; and so went, on Christmas-day, to receive in the king's chapel, after which I was more troubled than ever, and could never be in quiet till I had told my desire to a Catholic, who brought a priest to me, and that was the first I ever did converse with, upon my word. The more I spoke to him, the more I was confirmed in my design; and, as it is impossible for me to doubt of the words of our blessed Savior, who says the holy sacrament is his body and blood, so I cannot believe that he who is the author of all truth, and who has promised to be with his Church to the end of the world, would permit them to give that

* Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury, Blandfort, Bishop of Worcester.

† Blandfort, Bishop of Worcester

holy mystery to the laity but in one kind, if it were not lawful so to do.

"I am not able, nor, if I were, would I enter into disputes with any body. I only, in short, say this for the changing of my religion; which, I take God to witness, I would never have done, if I had thought it possible to save my soul otherwise. I think I need not say it is any interest in this world leads me to it. It will be plain enough to every body, that I must lose all the friends and credit I have here by it; and have very well weighed which I could best part with, my share in this world, or the next. I thank God I found no difficulty in the choice.

"My only prayer is, that the poor Catholics of this nation may not suffer for my being of their religion; that God would but give me patience to bear them, and then send me any afflictions in this world, so I may enjoy a blessed eternity hereafter.

"St. James's, *Aug.* 20th, 1670."

I am sensible this piece will make a more powerful impression upon minds that are sincere, than the strongest arguments I can produce. For, in disputes, all men are naturally upon their guard, as in an enemy's country, and suspect there lies a fallacy hid in every argument that presses too hard upon them. But in this piece, there is nothing but plain matter of fact, delivered with such an air of sincerity and candor, as prevents all suspicion of fallacious dealing, and finds its way to the heart without resistance. I will only add this one reflection, that there is not a Protestant in the world, but, if he traces the *reformation* of the Church whereof he is a member to its source, will find that either avarice, ambition, revenge, or some other criminal passion, gave a beginning to it.

THE

SHORTEST WAY

TO END

DISPUTES

ABOUT

RELIGION.

PART II.

IN ANSWER TO ALL OBJECTIONS AGAINST INFALLIBILITY

CONTAINED IN A BOOK ENTITLED

"THE CASE STATED," &c.

INTRODUCTION.

As I was finishing the last chapter of what I now call the first part, I had no thoughts of adding a second, imagining I had but little more to do. But the book entitled, "The Case stated between the Church of Rome and the Church of England," falling casually into my hands, I was soon convinced that a second part would be necessary, to answer the various objections, some old, some new, against the infallibility of the Church, which is warmly opposed by the author of that book. It is a dispute between a lord and a gentleman. The lord is made to personate the Roman Catholic, and the gentleman is the advocate for the Church of England. I shall call him by that name, as often as I have occasion to speak of him. And I will here do the supposed author of the book (for he has not set his name to it) the justice to own that he has appeared in print, on several occasions, very much to his honor, and convinced the world that a good cause loses nothing of its merits by passing through his hand. It is a pity so good a pen was ever employed in the defence of any other. But I presume the gentleman had a mind to

try whether he could manage a bad one with equal success.

I will not, however, pretend to pass my judgment upon the merits of his performance. But I can safely say that, whatever impression the gentleman's discourse may have made upon his noble antagonist, the reading of it has given me a very mean opinion of the Protestant cause; finding that, even when it has so able an advocate to plead for it, it stands nevertheless in need of having recourse not only to little tricks and fallacies of reason, but even slander, to support it.

I shall discover a large number of the former in my answer to his objections. But I think his laboring, as he has done, to prove that the members of the Church of Rome are guilty of as rank idolatry as any of the Jews or heathens ever were, is a most flagrant instance, that whoever will write against that Church must lay aside the trifling considerations of justice, honor, and conscience, follow the popular cry, and never examine whether a thing be true or false, but whether it will please.

Does the gentleman really think us guilty of the black crime he has charged us with, or not? If he does, I pity his ignorance, which, however, is not excusable in one of his profession. If not, with what conscience could he take so much pains to mislead others into a belief of it? Nay, the aspersion, as foul as it is, reaches not only that whole illustrious body of Roman Catholics

now in being, among whom there are so many great princes, worthy prelates, and other persons of the greatest merit; but even all our noble ancestors, who lived before the pretended reformation, and among whom there were thousands both of learned and holy men, are equally involved in the accusation. Were these, then, all idolaters? Did they all live and die in a state of damnation? Or is not idolatry a damnable sin? What does the gentleman think? For one of the two must be true. Either all our ancestors, who, for many hundred years professed the same faith as the Church of Rome now does, and have left behind them so many unquestionable monuments of their piety and zeal for the true worship of God, — either, I say, they were all damned, or the gentleman is guilty of slander; which I am sure is a damnable sin, and excludes from salvation those who die guilty of it.

Mr. Thorndike, an eminent Protestant divine, has treated us, at least in this point, with more justice and candor. For (in Epil. p. 146) he writes thus: "I must and do freely profess, that I find no position necessary to salvation prohibited, none destructive to salvation enjoined to be believed, by the Church of Rome." And, in his Just Weights and Measures, (chap. 2:) "Let not them who charge the pope to be antichrist, and Papists idolaters, lead the people by the nose to believe that they can prove their supposition, when they cannot." This, indeed, looks something like fair dealing.

But, lest the design of this second part should be mis-

taken, I must acquaint the reader that I pretend not to answer any thing more of the "Case stated" than what relates to the infallibility of the Church, which is precisely the subject I have undertaken. And, indeed, all controversy ought to begin and end here; for, if this point be once solidly proved, and all objections against it fully answered, all disputing after that is but a mere academical exercise for dispute's sake. The gentleman himself seems to be in some measure sensible of it, in his attacking this branch of Catholic doctrine with the greatest number of arguments, and using his utmost efforts to overthrow it. For this is properly striking at the root, or, as he calls it, "going to the bottom of the cause at once." But its foundations are too deeply laid to be undermined; and the most furious winds and rains beat in vain upon a house that is founded upon a rock. Matt. vii. 25.

However, the gentleman endeavors to prepare his noble peer to hearken favorably to him, by putting him in mind "that he ought not to lose his estate for his religion, till he has considered how far his conscience will allow him to conform to what is required of him by the laws of England." p. 1. Though this looks something like offering a bribe to a man's conscience, (a good estate being a very persuasive argument,) the proposal is, however, but fair and reasonable in itself. For his lordship would be justly blamed by all the world, if he should lose an estate, to which he has a just title, for any thing but conscience' sake. Nay, I dare confidently say, there is not a Roman Catholic in Great

Britain but would conform immediately if his conscience would permit him. For, truly, when interest and conscience can be reconciled together, a man must be either stark-mad or of a very self-denying disposition, not to secure the one as well as the other. And therefore, if the gentleman has convinced his lordship, with the wonderful strength of his eloquence and reason, that he may change his religion without wronging his conscience, and save both soul and estate at once, I think his lordship will stand very much in his own light in not conforming to what the laws require of him.

But I must deal plainly, and declare, with all sincerity, I have not yet found any thing of moment in the gentleman's discourse, to invalidate either the infallibility or any other doctrine of that Church whereof his lordship professes himself a member, nor, by consequence, to give him a worse opinion than he had before of the religion of his forefathers, which I have proved to be as ancient as Christianity itself. It came with it hand in hand into England, above fifteen hundred years ago,—viz., in the reign of king Lucius; and, being driven, about two hundred years after, by the pagan Saxons, into the mountains of Wales, was reëstablished five hundred years before the Norman conquest, and maintained, without any alteration, till the reign of Henry VIII., who first rejected the pope's spiritual authority, because he had not complaisance to approve of his divorce from a person to whom he had been married above twenty years, and that without the least scruple of conscience, till his unfortunate passion for

Anne Bullen suggested the pretended scruple to color his adultery. But the long train of black crimes, which were the consequences of it, shows plainly what sort of conscience it was that ushered in the *reformation*, and suffices to disturb the conscience of any thinking Protestant, who has not a greater concern for his interest than religion.

I shall premise a few general remarks, before I give a direct answer to the gentleman's objections against the infallibility of the Church.

CHAPTER I.

SOME GENERAL REMARKS.

SECTION I.

THE GENTLEMAN S DEXTERITY IN MANAGING HIS CAUSE.

I OBSERVE, first, that, in the whole conversation upon the infallibility of the Church, against which the gentleman has planted his best artillery, he has not thought fit to allow his good lord one single text out of the New Testament, and but two out of the Prophets, whereof one, out of Malachy, (ii. 7,) being nothing to the purpose, as it is translated in the Protestant Bible, is easily refuted by him, and so I freely give it up. The other, taken out of Isaiah lix. 21, is as follows: "My spirit, that is upon thee, and the word which I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, says the Lord, from henceforth, and for ever."

This indeed is something. But the gentleman pretends (page 28) that the promise it contains was first made to the Jewish Church, and belongs literally to her. But since he barely affirms it, without any manner of proof for what he says, I presume I am not bound to

be of his opinion. Nay, I am very confident the context is against him. For the promise in question is placed between two prophecies, both relating to the Christian Church. It is ushered in by that which foretells the establishment of the Church by the coming of the Messiah, which can be no other than the Christian Church; and it is immediately followed by the other, which contains an ample description of her future increase and splendor, by all nations, kings, and princes, flocking to her. Now to this Church the promise is made wholly and literally; and I leave any one to judge whether it be consistent with good sense, to understand both the predictions of the Christian Church, and the promise, which has a manifest connection with them, of the Jewish.

This, however, may be a mistake of inadvertency or of a little fit of laziness, which would not let the gentleman give himself the trouble to examine the context. But I cannot so easily excuse his having concealed from his lordship all the strong and clear texts in the New Testament, on which our belief of an infallible Church is chiefly grounded. What! could he afford his lordship no texts but out of the Prophets, whose language is always more or less obscure, and is therefore more liable to various interpretations? Had he never heard of these promises of our Savior?—"Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 18. "I will ask my Father, and he will send you another comforter to abide with you for ever." John xiv. 16. "The comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom my Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you." John xiv. 26. "When the spirit of truth is come, he will lead you into all truth." John xvi. 13. "Go ye, and teach all nations; and lo! I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Matt. xxviii, 20. Had he never read, in St. Paul, that "the Church

is the pillar and ground of truth"? Tim. iii. 15. Surely the gentleman could not be ignorant of any of these celebrated texts, so often quoted by Catholic authors, who, to his certain knowledge, regard them as the strongest proofs of the Church's infallibility. And why then were they wholly overlooked? Why was not his lordship permitted to quote St. Matthew, St. John, and St. Paul, whose words are plain and intelligible to the meanest capacity, as well as Malachy and Isaiah, whose prophetic language is not altogether so clear? Truly, one may easily guess some probable reasons that induced him to it.

First: It was not the gentleman's business to raise scruples in favor of a fundamental point of Popery. But if he had given his lordship leave to produce those texts, and set them in the most advantageous light, they might have made dangerous impressions upon many unbiased readers. It was, therefore, safest to omit them wholly.

But he had probably a second motive for it, viz., the same that induced him to make his lordship, every now and then, blunder out something very weak and absurd. And this was, to make his ignorant readers believe that the Church of Rome has nothing more to say for herself than what that noble advocate says for her. The truth is, his lordship makes so despicable a figure, throughout the whole conversation, that I cannot forbear saying, the author has not used him like a gentleman. Nay, he appears more like a pupil receiving lectures from his preceptor than a disputant arguing fairly upon the square with his adversary. His share in the dialogue is like one of those underparts which are only written to set off the hero, or principal character, of a play. For, when his lordship is allowed to speak, it is for the most part either to furnish the gentleman with a decent transition, to pass forward in his learned discourse; or give him a fair occasion to divert his readers with some witty jest, which often supplies the

want of argument, and is found by experience to have very good success; or, finally, to say some very weak thing to cut out matter for the author's triumph; of which I shall give a remarkable instance, (p. 45,) where the lord speaks thus: "But Christ being come, he was then the Church." Which the gentleman refutes very learnedly in this manner: "Christ was not the Church, for he came to redeem the Church; he did not come to redeem himself." I am wholly of the gentleman's opinion, and pity his lordship's blunder.

Again, (p. 95,) where the gentleman, after having harangued for above five pages together, without any interruption from his peaceable lord, concludes with this vehement interrogation: "And what difference is there between having no guide, or one you cannot find?" To which his lordship answers very wisely thus: "If I cannot find him, I have him not, and that is all one as to have none." This indeed is a very weighty discovery, viz., that not to have a guide and to have no guide is all one. Whereupon his lordship, not having a word more to say for himself, cries out, "Miserable man, if he has no infallible guide, and is fallible himself, and yet upon his going right depends his eternal happiness or misery!" Here his lordship fairly gives up the cause; and I doubt not the gentleman expects, that all his readers will here unanimously conclude, that the whole Roman Catholic Church is nonplussed in the person of her noble disputant. However, I exhort his lordship to take heart; for I assure him the case is not so desperate as he imagines; and I hope, with God's assistance, to show that the Church stands still as firm as the rock upon which she is built. The artillery wherewith her enemy shoots at her is but charged with powder, which makes a great noise, but does no execution.

I observe, secondly, that the gentleman has not quoted any one of the ancient fathers, to patronize his fallible Church. Which I take for a tacit confession that an-

tiquity is against him. For I cannot believe that a person so well versed in the writings both of modern and ancient authors would have slighted so considerable an advantage, if he had found any thing in the latter that favored his cause. The truth of the matter is, I find but one sort of antiquity — I mean the old condemned heretics, such as the Donatists — for him. And, what is very remarkable, he has not a text (one only, which is the least to the purpose amongst them, excepted) but was objected by those heretics against the Church's infallibility, and answered by St. Austin, as I shall show hereafter.

I observe, thirdly, that the gentleman affects very often to appear wholly ignorant of what we mean by the Roman Catholic Church, and to confound it with the particular church, or diocese, of Rome. p. 28, 30, 43, &c. Now, by means of this fallacy, several truths which have no relation but to the Church in general, being applied to the particular church, or diocese, of Rome, are not only false but absurd; which I presume was what the gentleman aimed at — for I have not charity enough to think it an involuntary mistake. But this way of stating things wrong, and then charging one's adversary with all the absurdities that follow from it, is, in my opinion, no very honorable way of proceeding; though I find it to be very customary among Protestant writers, and particularly in reference to the point in question. But if it be done with design, nothing can be more unfair; if ignorantly, it deserves no milder censure than to be called a downright blunder.

I shall, therefore, tell the gentleman once for all, and in the clearest terms I am able to express myself, that, when you speak of the Roman Catholic Church, and maintain it to be that infallible Church which Christ has established upon earth, and to which all his promises of a perpetual assistance were made, we mean not the particular church, or diocese, of Rome;

which, as a diocese, has its jurisdiction limited, and is no more the universal Church than the diocese of Paris or Toledo — because a part is not the whole; but we mean the whole body of Roman Catholics, whatsoever country or diocese they belong to, professing the same faith, and living in communion with the bishop of Rome, whom they acknowledge to be their supreme pastor, or head of their Church on earth. This is plain English; and, if the gentleman will not understand it, but persists in his real or pretended ignorance, and to impose upon his reader with a manifest equivocation, I can say no more to render him sensible of his mistake.

I observe, fourthly, that the gentleman has sometimes a great itching to shift the state of the question from the infallibility of the Church to that of the pope. Nay, (p. 23,) he tells his lordship in plain terms, "that not to place the infallibility in the pope is giving up our whole foundation." I am sorry he understands the doctrine of our Church no better, which he ought to have done, before he wrote against it. For, as a controvertist, he ought only to dispute against articles of our faith fairly stated, and not against private opinions. Now the infallibility of the pope is one of these. Some Catholic divines write for it, and many against it, without any breach of communion with the see of Rome. And therefore, the gentleman shall have the liberty of talking by himself upon that subject as much as he pleases. For I am not bound to answer any thing, wherein the article of faith, which I pretend to maintain, is not concerned.

I observe, lastly, that the gentleman has made good use of a certain old stratagem to stop his lordship's mouth, and cut him off short, when he but mentioned the proving the authority from Scripture. I mean, the putting him into a panic terror of running round in a circle, (p. 35.) I fancy his lordship thought it was as terrible a thing as running the gantlet. Nay, I find

him so frightened with it, that, after a very short defence of a line or two of nonsense, he yields at discretion, and gives himself tamely up to the gentleman's skill, to conjure him out what way he thinks best. Perhaps it was nothing but the hard word "circle" that confounded his lordship; for it is a term of art in logic; and every man is not bound to be as learned as the gentleman. I shall, therefore, for the instruction of the ignorant, explain the meaning of what logicians call *circulus vitiosus*, a vicious circle, — that is, a circle not to be allowed of by way of legal proof in any dispute; and then show that neither his lordship had any reason to be afraid of it, nor the gentleman to assert so positively "that we can never conjure ourselves out of it.

SECTION II.

THE GENTLEMAN'S CIRCLE EXAMINED.

THE point in question, relating to the pretended circle, seems to be, whether Papists may be allowed to prove the Church's infallibility from Scripture? The gentleman flatly denies it. And I cannot blame him for it; because he certainly loses his cause, if he allows of it. But what pretence has he to deny them a thing so just and reasonable in itself? Have Papists, then, forfeited their title to the Scriptures, as well as to their birthright? Or is not the written Word of God a good theological proof in any dispute concerning religion? I confess, I have taken some pains to prove the Church's infallibility from those divine oracles; and flattered myself, that I had done it effectually. But I have labored in vain, if I am bound to believe the gentleman. For it seems the Scriptures are all contraband goods,

when imported by a Papist; and I am to suppose the gentleman has a patent from heaven to seize them all for his own use.

But how does he make good his title against us? He tells us, (p. 35,) "that we believe the Scriptures because the Church bids us, and we believe the Church because the Scriptures bid us." And this he calls "the old circle, out of which we can never conjure ourselves." Surely the gentleman is too clearsighted not to be conscious to himself of the sophistry and weakness of this argument.

I answer, therefore, that the word *believe* is very equivocal; for it may be either taken for "an act of divine faith grounded wholly and solely upon its proper motive, or for an assent of the judgment convinced by the force of any sort of argument." If the word *believe* be taken the first way, as it always is when we speak strictly and properly, then I assure the gentleman "that we neither believe the Scriptures because the Church bids us, nor the Church because the Scriptures bid us." And so we do not so much as enter into any part of his circle, to stand in need of his skill to be conjured out of it.

If, therefore, he asks me, "why I believe the inspiration of Scriptures," I answer, precisely, "Because it is a truth which God has revealed." If he asks me, again, "why I believe the Church's infallibility," I answer, as before, "Because God has revealed it;" and this, viz., "the revelation of God," is the only proper motive into which all divine faith is resolved.

But, if he asks me further, "how I come to know for certain that God has revealed these and other truths," I answer him, "Because the Church of Christ has declared it." I mean not the Church of Christ as she is infallible, for that is one of the mysteries to be believed, but merely as she is an illustrious society, and under those advantages which common sense and experience may judge of.

Lastly, if he asks me "what inducements I have to convince me that the Church whereof I am a member is the Church of Christ, rather than any other separate society," I answer, "that I am convinced of it by the same general motives of credibility which convinced St. Austin, and kept him within the pale of the Catholic Church." I have quoted his words at large, (part 1, chap. 3,) and so I need not repeat them. But this learned father looked upon those motives to be so strong, so evident, and convincing, that he declared it to be a piece of the most insolent madness not to yield to them. So that, although the Scriptures had not been written, — nay, though Christ had made no promise of infallibility to his Church, — nothing but a madman could refuse to believe her preferably to any authority upon earth.

Thus it is manifest that our faith runs not round in the pretended circle; because all divine faith is resolved wholly and solely into the supreme authority of God himself; and every branch of it is grounded on no other proper and essential motive than because God has revealed it.

But, since the same truths may be believed upon several motives, — if the word *believe* signifies no more than an assent of the judgment, convinced by any theological proof, — then it is true what the gentleman says, "that we believe the Scriptures because the Church bids us, and we believe the Church because the Scriptures bid us." This, I say, is very true, because the inspiration of Scripture is legally proved from the authority of the Church, and the infallibility of that Church is as legally proved from Scripture. But this is so far from what is called running round in a vicious circle, or proving a thing by itself, that it is a way of arguing not only allowed of among philosophers and divines, but absolutely necessary in all cases, when two things prove each other reciprocally; as when an effect is proved from its cause, and the cause reciprocally from its effect.

The same happens when two persons of undoubted credit give testimony for each other.

I shall content myself with giving an instance of the latter. For example, St. John the Baptist is proved to have been a prophet from the testimony of Christ; and Christ is proved to be the Messias from the testimony of St. John. No Christian can reject these proofs as illegal. And why, then, may not the Scriptures be proved from the testimony of the Church, and the Church reciprocally from the testimony of Scriptures? Both proofs, indeed, are circular; and therefore, as the former must be unquestionably admitted, the latter cannot be excepted against.

If the gentleman answers that such as knew Christ, by his miracles, before they knew St. John, might, upon Christ's word, believe St. John; and such as first knew St. John to be a prophet, before they knew Christ, might, upon St. John's word, believe Christ, — I answer, that this opens the old circle for me, and puts me out of all danger of being hemmed in. First, then, I know the Church of Christ by her outward visible marks, or motives of credibility, which are so strong and evident, that, according to St. Austin, I must be a madman not to believe her. This, then, is the door which lets me into the circle, and lets me out again when I am in it.

This Church, which is a society of the greatest wisdom and authority upon earth, tells me, for example, that the whole New Testament was divinely inspired. I therefore believe, upon her testimony, that the New Testament contains nothing but revealed truths. Now, amongst other truths contained in it, I find Christ's positive promise "that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church," Matt. xvi. 18; and another promise "that he will be with her even unto the consummation of the world." Matt. xxviii. 19. I likewise find, in St. Paul, that the Church is the "pillar and ground of truth." 1 Tim. iii. 15. Upon these, and such-like testimonies of Holy Scriptures, I believe it

to be a revealed truth that the Church is infallible. And thus the Church, known to me by her outward visible marks, first gives testimony for the infallibility of Scriptures, and then the Scriptures give testimony for the infallibility of the Church. And let any man now show me, if he can, a difference between this circle and that of proving St. John to be a prophet from the testimony of Christ, and proving, reciprocally, Christ to be the Messias from the testimony of St. John.

But what is a vicious circle? I answer, a vicious circle is, when two propositions are made use of to infer one another reciprocally, without having any other proof to support them; but, if they be proved from other strong and convincing reasons, this opens the circle, and hinders it from being what we call a vicious one. Now this is the very case in reference to the Church's infallibility and the authority of Scriptures. The Church of Christ, as such, is first proved from all the general motives of credibility which clearly mark out this Church to us as the most illustrious, and therefore the most credible, society upon earth in matters of religion. Her authority, thus established, is a legal and sufficient evidence even for those truths which reason cannot fathom. If, then, amongst other points, she propounds to her children these two articles, viz., the divine authority of Scriptures, and her own infallibility in matters of religion, these two, like Christ and St. John, bear witness to each other; yet, having each a sufficient evidence from the motives of credibility by which the Church proves her charter for the delivery of revealed truths, the door is open, and there is no danger of running round in a vicious circle.

However, we must here observe that, when we believe the Scriptures, or any other article, upon the authority of the Church, merely as she is an illustrious society, this is not an act of divine faith, but only preparatory to it; because divine faith is resolved wholly and solely into the revelation of God himself. But,

though it be not an act of divine faith, it is attended with such a moral certainty as excludes all reasonable doubts, and obliges us to believe it upon the revelation of God; because, as we are bound to do a thing when we are morally certain that it is commanded by God, so we are bound to believe a thing when we are morally certain that it is revealed by God; and this belief is properly that supernatural assent of divine faith which the Holy Ghost works in the hearts of all good Christians.

But there is another thing which secures me from a vicious circle, with reference to the gentleman against whom I dispute; for a circle cannot be called vicious, with reference to an adversary who, by his own principles, is bound to admit of either of the propositions which prove each other reciprocally. And therefore, when I dispute against a member of the Church of England, who, by his own principles, is bound to believe the New Testament to have been divinely inspired, I may legally maintain the Church's infallibility against him from texts taken out of those sacred writings, because it is a principle agreed upon betwixt us, and no man is bound to prove a principle of his adversary's own concession. Nay, though I myself believed not a word of the New Testament, I might legally take the advantage of it against a Protestant who believes it; because a man's own principles, though in the hands of an enemy that denies them, are always lawful arms against him: for this is what we properly call *argumentum ad hominem* — a certain cut-throat way of confuting a man from his own principles.

It is true, indeed, were I to maintain the Church's infallibility against a Jew or heathen, it would be ridiculous to prove it from any text taken out of the New Testament, because neither of them allows it to be the Word of God. Nor could I prove it to be the Word of God from the authority of the Church, because both Jews and heathens reject her authority; and therefore

I should be obliged, in this case, to make use of other arguments to convince them; namely, the Jew, by producing the testimony of the ancient prophets, which he allows of, and the heathen, by proposing to him those general motives of credibility which are most proper to dispose him to a favorable opinion of the Christian faith.

But since I hope, by the grace of God, that the gentleman I have to deal with is neither Jew nor heathen, but a Christian, and, by consequence, believes, as I do, that the New Testament has been written by divine inspiration, and contains nothing but revealed truths, its authority is, between him and me, as a *postulatum* in mathematics, not to be called in question, or as a preliminary agreed on by both sides. Nay, I think I should put an affront upon the gentleman, if I should labor to convince him that the gospels contain the pure Word of God; for he would have reason to ask me whether I took him for a Jew or heathen. And therefore, though I cannot prove to the gentleman, as being a Protestant, the divine inspiration of Scriptures from the infallible authority of the Church, because he denies it; yet I may prove the Church's infallibility from Scripture, because he allows it; and if, for dispute's sake, he would take a fancy to deny that too, I should be forced to deal with him as with a Jew or heathen. But, since we are perfect friends, and have no manner of disputes about this matter, I shall always suppose the inspiration of Scriptures to be a principle of his own, and take the advantage of it against him, which, with the gentleman's good leave, puts me out of all danger of running round in a vicious circle, or standing in need of his aid, which he offers very obligingly, to be conjured out of it; nay, I have reason to hope we shall hear no more of it; for, in reality, such a poor, threadbare argument, which he knows has been confuted a thousand times, does no honor either to him or his cause. But let us now see upon what grounds the gentleman believes the revelation of Scriptures.

SECTION III.

THE GENTLEMAN'S PLAIN EVIDENCE OF THE REVELATION OF SCRIPTURES EXAMINED.

PAGE 49, the noble lord speaks thus, and, indeed, very much to the purpose, which is a favor very rarely allowed him: "But," says he, "the deist would ask you upon what authority you believe the revelation of Scriptures; and, since you will not have it built upon the authority of the Church, I see not what authority you allege for it." To which the gentleman answers, (p. 50,) "Nor I either; for I put it upon no authority. It is evidence, and no authority, upon which my belief of the Scriptures is founded." And again, (p. 53,) upon his lordship's saying "that the canon of the New Testament was established upon the authority of the Church," the gentleman answers, "No, my lord, not at all by her authority, but plainly by evidence."

I confess I was very agreeably surprised upon my first reading what the gentleman here tells us; for though, as to my own particular satisfaction, I stand in no need of his plain evidence to be convinced of the revelation of Scriptures, because I firmly believe it upon the authority of the Church, yet I should be glad of any additional proof to corroborate a truth of that importance, merely for the sake of those who see not things in the same light as I do. Thus, though I firmly believe the being of a God upon the motives of divine revelation, and would believe it without hesitation, though there were no natural evidence for it, yet this hinders not my being of a judgment that such proofs are very useful, both because they are no prejudice to the faith of those who believe it upon higher motives, and because they may help to lead others gradually to it; besides that atheists and deists are such pernicious ene-

mies to religion, that all sorts of arms ought to be employed against them.

Being, therefore, prepossessed with a great opinion of the gentleman's wit and learning, and observing with what intrepid assurance he puts the revelation of Scriptures upon plain evidence, — nay, upon evidence even stronger than that there is such a city as Rome or Constantinople, which any man may go and see with his own eyes, — it raised in me an expectation of something very extraordinary, and for which all Christianity would be forever indebted to him. But alas! my disappointment was equal to the greatness of my expectation, when I came to consider the whole system upon which his pretended plain evidence is grounded; for, instead of evidence without authority, I found nothing but some part of that very authority against which he has so solemnly declared.

To make good what I say, I shall premise some general reflections, which made me apprehend, from the very beginning, that the gentleman's so much boasted evidental way would prove a mere *rodomontado*, and, in the performance, fall very short of answering so bold an undertaking.

1st. Plain evidence, excluding an authority, (which is what the gentleman pretends to,) must either be from the immediate and unquestionable information of a man's own senses, or the conclusion of a logical or mathematical demonstration, inferred from first and evident principles. I presume he cannot mean the first sort of evidence, because he neither saw the apostles or evangelists write, nor heard them affirm that all they wrote was divinely inspired; much less could he see the inspiration itself. And as to the other, if the gentleman ever gratifies the world with a philosophical or mathematical demonstration of the true canon or revelation of Scriptures, I will freely own him to be the most cunning man in Europe.

2dly. If the revelation of Scriptures were full as evi-

dent, and far more evident, (for this the gentleman affirms,) than that there is such a city as Rome or Constantinople, it is morally impossible there should be a real Jew, Mahometan, or deist, remaining in the world; for all these understand plain and evident demonstration as well as Christians; and I dare safely say no man in his right senses ever doubted whether the cities of Rome or Constantinople are yet in being.

3dly. If the evidence of the canon of Scriptures, and their being divinely inspired, were as strong, nay, much stronger, than that there is such a city as Rome or Constantinople, such plain and strong evidence could not fail to put an immediate end to all differences about the canon of the New Testament, which, however, subsist to this very day; though the gentleman, by what mistake I know not, tells us (p. 53) "that there is no dispute between any churches concerning the canon of the New Testament." I suspect he said it to stop the way to this objection, which otherwise was ready to meet every body full in the face; for no man would imagine it possible there should be disputes between churches about a thing more evident than that there is such a city as Rome.

4thly. The gentleman's declaring for plain evidence, against all authority whatsoever, for the revelation of Scriptures, gave me some concern for his faith; because faith is (properly speaking) an assent to things precisely as they are not apparent to sense, nor evident to reason; being defined, by St. Paul, *argumentum non apparentium* — the proof of things not appearing. Heb. xi. 1. And therefore St. Gregory (4 Dia. c. 5) spoke very properly, when he said *apparentia fidem non habent, sed agnitionem;* i. e. things which appear evident (as such) are not the objects of faith, but of knowledge. So that, if the gentleman believes the Scripture upon plain evidence, exclusively of any other motive to ground his belief upon, it follows that his belief of it is not faith, but science; and so he is yet void of faith.

Nay, it will further follow, that, for a certain number

of years after he came to the use of reason, he had no belief at all of the revelation of Scriptures; for, if he never believed the Scriptures upon any authority, he could not believe them at all till he gained that evidence which he makes the sole foundation of his belief. Now, in probability, he will grant he had not that evidence till after he had ended all his studies of humanity and philosophy, and made some progress in the study of theology. And, according to this calculation, we may guess he was near twenty-four years old before he had any belief at all of the Scriptures, or mysteries of Christianity which they contain.

These are some of the difficulties that occurred to me against the gentleman's pretended evidence, set up by him in opposition to all authority. "For," says he, "I put it upon no authority. It is evidence, and no authority, upon which my belief of the Scriptures is founded." Let us now see how he makes good this magnificent declaration, and whether "the mountain in labor has not brought forth a mouse." He has favored us with no other proof of his plain evidence, in his "Case stated," than what is contained in the following passage, p. 53:—

"*Lord.* But the canon of the New Testament was established upon the authority of the Church.

"*Gent.* No, my lord, not at all upon her authority, but plainly by evidence. They proceeded wholly upon evidence, viz, whether such an epistle was sent to such a church, as to the church of Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, &c, who carefully kept the originals, and sent copies to other churches, as was commanded. Col. iv. 16. And, by this communion of the churches one with another, the true Scriptures were known; and it is commonly set down, at the end of the epistles, by what hand they were sent. And, by this method, the spurious epistles and gospels, forged by heretics, were at first detected, as you will find in the last chapter of the fifth book of Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, where it is told that the

heretics were brought to this test, and could not produce the originals whence they took their copies; and that their copies did vary from one another, every one adding what opinions came into his own head; and that they could not tell from whom they had learned such new doctrines. Thus the canon of the New Testament was settled in those ages, when these evidences were fresh and notorious."

Here is the whole passage quoted at length, though scarce a full half of it contains any thing of proof relating to the matter in question; and the whole evidence amounts to this, viz., that St. Paul took care to send his epistles to the respective churches, to which they were written, by faithful persons, in whom he could confide with all safety; that these churches carefully kept the originals, and sent true copies of them to other churches, which might at any time be compared with the originals, (as we must suppose,) and by that means be distinguished from spurious ones, which heretics might forge. I will add, moreover, (though the gentleman has not mentioned it,) that the same care was taken of all the other parts of the New Testament, as the gospels, the epistles of St. Peter, St. James, St. John, &c. Nay, I will also suppose that all the sacred writers, both of the gospels and epistles, when they delivered the originals, declared they were written by divine inspiration.

This, I think, is placing the gentleman's evidence in the clearest and strongest light; and I shall be far from attempting to disprove or invalidate any part of it. *Valeat, quantum valere potest.* But my only business shall be to prove that all the weight it has is owing to authority, and not to any evidence independent of it; which if I do, I cannot fail of having the honor of the gentleman's good company in the circle, of which he is as much afraid as if it were a figure cast by art magic to raise the devil.

Let it therefore be supposed that Phebe not only received the Epistle to the Romans from St. Paul's own

hand, with his declaration that he sent it as the Word of God, but even that she stood by, and saw him write it. The gentleman pretends that his belief of the revelation of this epistle is grounded upon evidence, and not upon authority. Then Phebe's belief had the same foundation, viz., evidence, and not authority. But how can this be? Indeed, in the supposition I have made, it was evident to Phebe's sight that the epistle was written by St. Paul, and by him delivered to herself, and evident to her hearing that St. Paul declared it to be the Word of God; but that it was really the Word of God, this was neither evident to her senses, nor to the natural light of her understanding, nor by virtue of any necessary conclusion drawn from known principles; therefore, her belief of it was not grounded upon evidence, properly so called.

Did she believe it to be the Word of God barely for being told so? No, surely; for an impostor might have told her as much. But she believed it because she was told it by one whose ability and integrity rendered his testimony unquestionable. So that her belief of that epistle's containing the Word of God was resolved into the revelation of God declared by St. Paul, whose miracles gave weight and authority to all he said or wrote. Her reason told her, indeed, that St. Paul was a man to be believed, as my reason tells me that the Church established by Christ is to be believed; and therefore, St. Paul having told her (as we will suppose) that the epistle she carried contained the Word of God, she concluded that she ought to believe him. But who sees not that this is both reasoning and concluding barely from authority, and that the evidence she had was not an evidence excluding authority, but wholly grounded upon it?

Now, if this were so with reference to the very person or persons who received the epistles or gospels immediately from the hands of the apostles, and heard their declaration that they contained nothing but revealed truths, they who received them at second, third, or

fourth hand, could surely have no other ground to believe that the writings conveyed to them were divinely inspired than the testimony of those from whom they received them. Let us trace back the whole matter to its very source.

Phebe, Titus, Tychicus, and others, into whose hands St. Paul and the other sacred penmen delivered their gospels or epistles, had a sure knowledge that they carried along with them the true material Scriptures. But how came the Romans, the Corinthians, the Ephesians, and the other churches, to receive them as such, but because they believed them to be so upon the relation of those that brought them, who, being persons of known integrity, could not be suspected of any intention to deceive them? So that all the Romans must, at first, have taken the epistle sent to them upon the authority of Phebe, or of some few among them who happened to be acquainted with St. Paul's style and hand-writing.

Again, when the churches of Rome, Corinth, &c., who carefully kept the originals, sent copies to other churches, I cannot imagine how those copies were any other way received for Scriptures by these that had never seen the originals, than upon the relation, testimony, and authority, of those who sent or brought them. And, if these first Christians had nothing else whereon to found their belief of the first Scriptural copies but the credible testimony of the churches who sent them, or of the persons who delivered them, I see not what other foundation the gentleman can have for his belief of them than the testimony and authority of that Church which has, from age to age, handed down this sacred treasure to us, and assures us that it contains the same Word of God which was at first delivered to the Christians, who received it barely upon that authority.

I say, further, that no matter of fact, as that there is such a city as Rome, or Constantinople, can never be known or rationally believed by any man, but upon authority, unless he either sees it with his own eyes, or has

an immediate revelation of it. The gentleman is very positive that his belief of such facts is wholly "from the nature of the evidence, which makes it impossible for mankind to concert such a lie, or to carry it on, without being detected." p. 51. But let us ask the gentleman a question or two. Suppose he himself should tell me that his "Case stated" had brought over the nobleman to the Protestant Church, and that I really believed it. Would not my belief of it be (properly speaking) founded on his authority, though my only motive for believing it was this, viz., that it was morally impossible for a person of the gentleman's character to concert such a lie, since he could not hope to carry it on without being detected? Again, when the apostles preached the mystery of Christ's resurrection to the people who had been eye-witnesses of their miracles, did these people ground their belief on evidence, or rather on the apostles' unquestionable authority? Most certainly on their authority. And why so? Because they considered it was impossible for persons so qualified to concert such a lie, or carry it on without being detected; which is so far from making against the Church's authority, that it proves the same to be evident and uncontestable, and, by consequence, a solid foundation for all true believers to build upon. His lordship, indeed, according to the true humor of the wise part that is allotted to him in the dialogue, calls a belief thus grounded "believing upon the authority of evidence." p. 50. It is true, the gentleman gives him a modest reprimand for it, telling him "that the expression is not proper;" but, had he been allowed to call it, in proper English, "a belief grounded upon evident and incontestable authority," I am confident the gentleman would have found it too hard a task to disprove it.

But, in order to throw a little dust before the reader's eyes, and keep him from discovering that his pretended evidence of the revelation of Scripture is, in reality, nothing else but uncontestable authority, he has laid

down such a notion of authority as is very fit to serve his turn. "If I believe a thing" (says he, p. 50) "purely for your telling me so, without any other reason, then I believe it purely upon your authority."

I must confess that, before I read this admirable notion of believing purely upon authority, I really thought that the credit and reputation of a person ought to be first well established, before he should be believed upon his word in any matter of moment. For does not every man of sense, before he assents to the relation of a thing, consider the character of the relator, and whether he has the ability and integrity which may entitle him to our assent? Did not our Savior declare the Jews would have been void of sin, in disbelieving his doctrine, if they had not had reason, from his miracles, to submit to his authority? Or did any converted Jew argue himself thus into Christianity? — "This man, whoever he be, says so and so; therefore I must believe it true without any other reason." May we not rather suppose he reasoned the case somewhat to this purpose? — "This man works miracles; these miracles evidently demonstrate his commission and authority from God; therefore I may and must depend upon his authority, and believe what he teaches."

But, according to the notion laid down by the gentleman, an authority well established ceases to be authority, and becomes plain evidence; for he plainly tells us that then alone we believe it purely because somebody tells us so, without having other reason for our belief of it. So that, by this rule, nothing can be believed upon any sort of authority, unless it be such a one as fools and children alone would depend upon; for, if I believe it for any other reason but because somebody tells me it is so, — that is, if I believe it because I have great opinion of the author's veracity and integrity, which is something more than his barely telling me so, — then it seems I believe it not upon authority, but evidence. What wonder is it that such unwarrantable notions should lead

the gentleman, and those that follow him, into a labyrinth of incoherencies and manifest absurdities?

In effect, notwithstanding his positive declaration for evidence against authority, he has proved nothing but the evidence of authority, i. e., "that the authority upon which we believe the revelation of Scriptures is evident and uncontestable." And, if he has made it appear that the evidence of authority is as strong, nay, much stronger, than that there is such a city as Rome, or Constantinople, I am heartily glad of it; the stronger the better, provided he tells us no more that it is evidence, and no authority, upon which his belief of the Scriptures is founded. For all the proof he has produced is flatly against it, unless he will strip the word *evidence* of its proper signification, in which divines and philosophers understand it, and take it, as we do in our courts of judicature, for witness or testimony; which, in reality, is owning the thing, and trifling with words. So that, whatever show he makes of running down the authority of the Church, it is all he has to depend upon for the canon of revelation of Scriptures; and I hope we shall hereafter be good company together in the circle.

But, if I cannot prevail with him, I hope, at least, St. Austin will, who has solemnly declared "that he would not believe the Gospels themselves, unless the authority of the Church induced him to it." Aug. Contra Epist. Fund. How different is the gentleman's true Protestant declaration from the Popish one made by St. Austin! *Gent.* "It is evidence, and no authority, upon which my belief of the Scripture is founded." *St. Aus.* "I would not believe the Gospels themselves, unless the authority of the Church induced me to it." I leave the reader to judge whether of the two is to be preferred.

I have now done with my remarks upon the gentleman's singular dexterity in managing his cause; and we may gather, from the few observations I have made, that he is not slavishly addicted to truth; but we shall be

more fully convinced of it, if we consider the unwarrantable propositions and calumnies scattered up and down in his book. I shall produce some of each sort, to convince the reader that I do him no wrong.

To begin with some of his unwarrantable propositions. I think the following deserve a place under that head: 1st. "That there never was a general council, nor ever can be." p. 22. 2dly. "That all God's promises are as conditional as his threatenings." p. 29. 3dly. "That all miracles are to be believed, or all rejected." p. 34. 4thly. "That it is blasphemy to believe the existence of a God upon the authority of the Church." p. 36. 5thly. "That the sacraments are only signs and seals, but no part of the Christian faith, nor absolutely necessary to salvation." p. 17, 18. 6thly. "That an infallible guide is no infallible assurance to those who are not infallible themselves." p. 90. 7thly. "That we must trust to private judgment in every thing without exception." p. 46. And 8thly, "That this article of the Apostles' Creed, 'I believe the Holy Catholic Church,' was but of late put into the creed." p. 202.

As to the crime of calumny, whereof I have accused him, besides that of idolatry, which is a very notorious one, the following instances will fully make good the charge: 1st, (p. 159,) he tells us "that the Scriptures and legends have the same foundation in the Church of Rome; therefore the common people believe them both alike, and the men of sense believe neither." 2dly. "That the belief of a universal bishop is the only article in our creed to be believed explicitly. As for the others, implicit will do for them all. That is, it is no matter whether we believe them or not, so the sovereignty of the universal bishop be maintained inviolably." p. 197, 198. Two such barefaced and noted calumnies are unbecoming a gentleman. The four following deserve the same censure: 3dly. "That with us images and relics are strictly and properly means of grace." p. 113. "And that we have ten thousand sacra-

ments of our own invention." p. 160. 4thly. "That it is a maxim in our canon law, that, though the pope should draw infinite numbers of people with him into hell, yet we must not find fault with him, nor reprove him." p. 108. 5thly. "That no absurdity so great, no text of Scripture so full and express, can be too hard for the infallibility of the Church of Rome." p. 91. 6thly. "That in our Church fornication is tolerated, if not allowed." And, two lines after, he adds, with a very serious air, "For this reason deadly sin is added to fornication in the Protestant litany." p. 177. I beg the favor of the gentleman to employ his interest that the deadly sin of slander may be added to it for the future, which is all the answer he deserves.

CHAPTER II.

HIS OBJECTIONS FROM SCRIPTURE ANSWERED.

Surely the gentleman was put to a very hard shift, when he was forced to join with the Donatists, and pick up at second hand the following texts to oppose the Church's infallibility: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in him; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." Isa. i. 5, 6. "My heritage is to me as a lion in the forest. It crieth out against me; therefore I have hated it: my heritage is unto me as a speckled bird." Jer. v. 8, 9. "Ye have departed out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble at the law. Ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord." Mal. ii. 7. "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Rom. iii. 12. And again, "that all the world might become guilty before God." Rom. iii. 19. "Case stated," p. 27.

One would be apt to suspect that a man of learning writes against his conscience, when he quotes such texts as these to defeat the clearest promises of Christ; for, in reality, they are as proper to disprove the circulation of the blood as the infallibility of the Church of Christ. However, I shall honor them with St. Austin's answer; and I have put them together, because the same answer despatches them all at once. "The Word of God," says he, "most commonly reprehends the wicked people of the Church in such a manner as if all were so, and as if there remained not so much as one man of piety.

Now these men, [the Donatists,] either of ignorance or malice, [I wish the gentleman may not be here concerned with his old friends,] gather such texts from Scripture as are found to be spoken against the wicked," who will continue mixed with the good to the world's end, or else of the desolation of the former people, the Jews; " and these they endeavor, by a forced construction, to urge against God's Church, that she may seem in a manner to have failed and perished throughout the world. But, if they will answer these writings, I desire them to lay aside such texts." Lib. de Unit. Eccl. c. 13.

I hope the gentleman will have so much deference to St. Austin's judgment as to lay them aside for the future. For what service can they do him, since it is apparent that they only contain a vehement reprehension of the general wickedness and corruption which had spread itself over the Jewish nation? as he may now justly complain of the looseness reigning among the generality of Christians; which, however, as St. Austin remarks, never was, nor ever will be, so universal, but that the good and wicked will be mixed together to the world's end. For, if wickedness should ever become the universal practice of mankind, how would it be true " that wheat and tares should grow together till the harvest "? since, in that supposition, there would be nothing but tares, and no wheat at all.

However, if the gentleman will understand some of those texts to be also predictions of the future failing of the Jewish Church, I shall easily agree to it. But what advantage will this be to his cause? For I have St. Austin, again, in the same book and chapter, pronouncing against the Donatists, that, from the failure of the old church, which had not the evangelical promises made to her, no consequence can be drawn to prove the failure of the present Church. " For now there is a Mediator of a better covenant, which is established upon better promises." Heb. viii. 6.

I come now to his text out of St. Luke: " When the

Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke xviii. 8. This doubtful interrogation is by the gentleman changed into a positive affirmation; and he makes Christ declare peremptorily that, at his second coming, "he will not find faith upon earth." pp. 45, 91. Whence he concludes that the whole Christian Church will then fail, as the Jewish church failed at his first coming.

But let us see whether St. Austin understood this text as the gentleman does; for I own I am always proud of being instructed by this eminent doctor, and think myself safe when I follow so good a guide. His words are these: "They [the Donatists] pretend that these words of our Lord, 'When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?' were spoken of the whole world's apostasy; but we understand them of that perfection of faith which is so hard to be attained by man, that, in the very saints, whilst they continue in this state of mortality, as in Moses himself, there is something that makes them tremble, or gives them cause to do so. Or else we understand them of that abundance of wicked and scarcity of good men, concerning which enough has been said already. And therefore our Lord expresses himself under a doubt. For he says not, 'When the Son of man cometh, he will not find faith upon earth,' but, 'Do you think he will find faith upon earth?' Now, surely his knowledge and foreknowledge of all things is inconsistent with any kind of doubt. But it was our doubt he designed to express by his own; because the many scandals which will arise towards the end of the world will occasion human weakness to speak in that manner." Lib. de Unit. Eccl. c. 15.

I will not pretend to add any thing of my own to so full and solid an answer to the fore-mentioned text, upon which the gentleman is pleased to lay a great stress, as his ancient confederates, the Donatists, did; pretending it to be a clear prediction of as general a failure of the Christian Church, at the second coming of Christ, as

that of the Jewish church was at his first. I shall only propose a few questions relating to this matter. 1st, then, I ask the gentleman whether the wheat and tares will not grow together till the harvest, and whether the persons marked out by the wheat will fall from their faith. 2dly. Whether, before the second coming of Christ, the true Church will not be persecuted by antichrist, and whether the true Church can be persecuted without having a visible being. 3dly. Whether the elect will not be preserved from being seduced by antichrist; and, if they be not seduced, whether they will not then continue to be members of the true Church.

These questions are somewhat troublesome, because the gentleman is too reasonable to refuse to own, 1st. That the wheat and tares are to grow together till the harvest, and that the persons marked out by the wheat will not fall from the true faith. 2dly. That the true Church will be persecuted by antichrist, and that a persecuted Church must have a visible being. 3dly. That the elect will be preserved from being seduced, and, by consequence, persevere, to the end, to be members of the true Church. All this, I say, the gentleman must own. And therefore I shall, by way of conclusion, ask one question more, viz., How all this is consistent with a total defection of the true Church, or with his saying, "that, at the second coming of Christ, there will be no faith upon earth."

I leave him to answer this as well as he can, and come to his last text, (Rom. xi. 22, 23,) where the apostle writes thus to the converted Gentiles at Rome: "Thou shalt also be cut off, if thou continuest not in the goodness of God." And, in reference to the Jews, he adds, "If they abide not still in unbelief, they shall be graft in. For God is able to graft them in again." Upon which the gentleman makes this weighty remark (p. 30): "And, of all the Gentile churches, this is said more particularly to the Church of Rome; for this is in the epistle written to her; and to her it was said, 'Thou

shalt also be cut off.'" This he imagines to be a cutting stroke upon us. I hope I may easily be pardoned this little quibble, which is the only one I shall be guilty of. But the gentleman's poor equivocation relating to the Church of Rome, set forth with an air of importance, is not, I think, altogether so pardonable in a serious dispute.

However, to give it a serious answer; I have already shown the difference between the particular church or diocese of Rome, and what we mean by the Roman Catholic Church. Now, no man ever doubted but that one particular church may fall from the true faith as well as another; for the promises of infallibility were not made to any particular church or diocese, but to the Church in general, which Christ came to establish, and whereof each particular diocese, or even nation, is but a part. So that the quoted words of St. Paul to the Romans would have had the same meaning, and been equally true, had they been written to the converted Gentiles living at Jerusalem or in any other city. But the whole epistle, out of which they are taken, was particularly addressed to the converted Jews and Gentiles at Rome, because there were disputes amongst them, each party arrogating to itself an advantage over the other; and the apostle, interposing as mediator between them, took care to manage the whole matter with such an equal hand, that neither party should have any reason to reproach or despise the other; and therefore, amongst other things, he told the converted Gentiles, who despised the Jews as an abandoned people, "that they should also be cut off, if they continued not in the goodness of God;" which was certainly said with no other view than to humble them, by putting them in mind that, as God had cast off the Jews for their wickedness, so he would also abandon them, if their lives did not answer the holiness of the faith they professed; and that, if the Jews returned to God by a sincere faith and repentance, "they should be graft in again." And

what can this make against the infallibility of the Church established by Christ? since it only shows that the true faith may be removed from one people to another.

Does the Church of Christ cease to have a being, because it is no longer in Africa or Egypt, where it once flourished most? Or, if one nation be abandoned, and another converted to the faith of Christ, will not those upon whom Almighty God bestows this favor become as true members of the Church as the others were before they were rejected? Or is it any thing to the purpose whether those who are cut off live at Rome or Constantinople? But the gentleman thought it a very material point to advertise his reader that St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans was written to the Christians who lived at Rome; so that, if those converted Christians and Jews, amongst whom there were disputes, had unluckily lived at Jerusalem, or in any other city but Rome, and his epistles had been addressed to them, the gentleman's learned remark would have been utterly disappointed, and he would have had even an equivocation to furnish out an argument withal.

Thus we see how the gentleman has labored to pick up texts, I suppose to make a flourish with, and give some color to his cause; for truly, any other six verses in the Bible would have been equally to his purpose.

CHAPTER III.

WHETHER ALL GOD'S PROMISES BE CONDITIONAL.

Page 32, the gentleman argues thus: "Nothing can be infallible but what is likewise impeccable. And therefore the Church may as well maintain her impeccability as her infallibility; for sin is the greatest error." I answer, that every sin is not the sin of heresy, or an error against faith; and if it be not, the Church's infallibility will not be hurt by it. It is therefore strange "that nothing can be infallible, but what is likewise impeccable." For cannot God preserve a man, or a whole society, from errors in faith, though at the same time he permits them to fall into sin? St. John says, "that he who pretends to be without sin deceives himself, and the truth is not in him." 1 John i. 8. Yet he was infallible in the writings of that epistle, and all the doctrine he preached. And so was Solomon when he wrote his Proverbs; yet he was very far from being impeccable. In a word, Christ has promised infallibility, but not impeccability, to his church. And therefore, the one may be maintained without the other.

But the gentleman has found out a most expedient way of utterly defeating all God's promises, by tacking a condition to them, and asserting boldly "that there is no such thing as an unconditional promise." pp. 28, 29, 30. But how does he go about to prove it? It would be too great a hardship on him to demand a solid proof when the matter will not bear it. First, then, he serves us up some whipped cream, and tells us, (p. 28,) "that,

as treason forfeits an estate or honors given by a prince, though in ever so positive terms, and without any condition expressed, because allegiance is always implied, so the Church may forfeit her charter." But I answer him, that God's infinite bounty is not to be measured by our short line. And therefore, allowing it to be true that a prince cannot bestow a title or honor, but that a condition is implied, must this be a law to the Almighty, and tie up his hands from bestowing an absolute and unconditional favor?

After this little flourish, the gentleman produces a few instances of conditional promises, and concludes, from them, that all the rest are so. But there is a rule or principle of argumentation, "That a universal consequence cannot be drawn from a few particular instances;" as we cannot conclude that all men are blind, because some are born under that misfortune. I grant, then, that some conditional promises are to be found in holy writ; as that to Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 30; that to the Israelites in the desert, Num. xiv. 34; and the other quoted out of Jer. xviii. 7, where God speaks of pulling down or building up any nation, according as it shall deserve. And the gentleman has made bold to join the Church twice with the text without having Jeremy's leave for it; which I think was not good manners.

But with what color of reason can he infer, from these few instances, that therefore all the promises made either to the Jewish or Christian church are conditional? nay, that "all God's promises are as conditional as his threatenings"? p. 29. For, to make good that proposition, he must either prove it from the very nature and essence of a promise, or from an adequate enumeration of all the promises God ever made; and then show, from unquestionable circumstances, (for a precarious guess will not satisfy,) that every one of those promises has a condition, if not expressed, at least implied.

He cannot prove it the first way; because, though a promise may be charged with conditions, its nature and

essence require no such thing; whereas all threats imply a condition in their very nature, because punishments cannot be justly inflicted unless they be first deserved. But God is surely master of his own favors, and may bestow them where and in what manner he pleases.

Neither can he prove it from an adequate enumeration of all God's promises recorded in holy writ. Nay, on the contrary, there are some very considerable ones, both in the Old and New Testament, that bear witness against him. 1st, God's promise to Noah, that the world shall not perish by a second deluge. Gen. ix. 2dly, His promise to Abraham, that the land of Canaan should be possessed by his seed. Gen. xii. 3dly, God's second promise to him, that his wife Sarah should have a son, in whose seed all nations should be blessed. Gen. xvii. 4thly, His promise to Zacharias, that his wife should bring forth a son, who should be the forerunner of the Messias; the effect of which promise could not be defeated even by the incredulity of the father. 5thly, God's promise to the blessed Virgin, that she should conceive by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. But lastly, and chiefly, the great promise of the Messias, which I scarce believe the gentleman himself will say is conditional; and what becomes then of his bold assertion, "that there is no promise but has a condition implied, and that all God's promises are as conditional as his threatenings"? But in advancing so unwarrantable a proposition, his only business was to sink the credit of God's promises in general. And so the promise of Christ, "that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church," which is as positive and unconditional as words can make it, would also be defeated, by being thrown into the number of conditional promises.

But the gentleman, in order to prove that the condition of our obedience is implied in every promise, tells us, "that our Savior has fully exemplified it in the parable of the husbandmen, who did not render

the fruits of the vineyard." p. 28. Now, whoever reads that parable (Matt. xxi. 33, &c. Luke xx. 9) will be convinced that the gentleman could pretend nothing else but to impose upon the ignorance and credulity of his reader.

The main drift of the parable was to forewarn the Jews of their approaching reprobation and ruin; but particularly the priests and scribes, who came to Christ in the temple, to question him concerning his authority and doctrine, saying to him, "By what authority dost thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?" Matt. xxi. 23. Luke xx. 2. Whereupon our Savior proposed the fore-mentioned parable, which contains a prediction of two things: 1st, That the Jews would soon after treat him as the husbandmen in the parable treated the heir of the vineyard; and 2dly, That they should be punished by God, as the husbandmen were punished by the lord of the vineyard. And though the gentleman will needs have the Christian church concerned in this parable, the drift and meaning of it was so very clear to the Jewish priests and scribes, "that from that very hour they sought to lay hands on Christ; for they perceived that he had spoken that parable against them." Luke xx. 19. Nay, it was impossible for them to judge otherwise; for our Savior himself, having ended the parable, made the application of it in the following words: "Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. xxi. 43. Which latter words, viz. "That the kingdom of God should be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," are the only words that have a relation to the Christian Church; and indeed, are nothing less than a positive prediction that the Church of Christ shall never be guilty of the apostasy or fall of the Jewish synagogue; for, if she were to follow the fate of the synagogue, either in crime or punishment, the difference between her and the synagogue would have been very

improperly represented by our Savior's saying "that the kingdom of God should be taken from the one," which did not bring forth the fruits thereof, "and given to the other, which should bring forth the fruits thereof." I add, that no condition of obedience can be implied, when obedience itself is a part of the promise; as it must certainly be, to verify our Savior's words, saying that the nation or people, to which the kingdom of God was to be given, "should bring forth the fruits thereof."

CHAPTER IV.

WHETHER AN INFALLIBLE GUIDE BE NOT AN INFALLIBLE ASSURANCE TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT THEMSELVES INFALLIBLE.

The gentleman tells us positively, (p. 90,) "That an infallible guide (suppposing such a one) would not be an infallible assurance to us, unless we were infallible too. For besides our not knowing him, or mistaking another for him, we might misunderstand his doctrine, and turn it to quite contrary purposes from what he intended." And, after a few lines, he concludes thus: "Therefore, whilst we are fallible ourselves, and liable to errors and mistakes, in vain we grope after an infallible assurance."

How miserably blind are they who see not that they are in an error, when, to support it, they find themselves obliged to write things that plainly shock good sense! What! Cannot I have an infallible assurance that another man has more wit and knowledge than myself, unless I have as much wit and knowledge as he, to be a judge of it? Has not a blind man an infallible assurance that his guide has better eyes than himself, unless the blind man sees as well as his guide? Finally, cannot I, though a fallible man, have an infallible assurance that the Scriptures are infallible? If, therefore, I believe my guide to be infallible, and my belief of it be grounded upon such motives that it is morally impossible I should be deceived, have I not an infallible assurance that he cannot mislead me, and that whatever he teaches is infallibly true?

But I ask the gentleman whether he has any infallible assurance of the mystery of the blessed Trinity, or the inspiration of Scriptures. If he says he has, then he must drop his argument; for I presume he is not himself infallible. If he says he has not, then he may reasonably doubt of either; and the next step is to deny both, and turn deist.

"But," says the gentleman, "unless we be infallible too, we may mistake our guide, or misunderstand him when we have found him." And this he proves from what happened in our Savior's time. "This," says he, (p. 90,) "was the case in our Savior's time. He was a guide truly infallible; and yet how few followed him, notwithstanding his miracles and heavenly doctrine!" But might not all those who saw his miracles, and heard his heavenly doctrine, have followed him, if they had not been hindered by their own wilful obstinacy and blindness? Was not the purity of his heavenly doctrine, confirmed by undoubted miracles, a sufficient proof of his infallibility? And could the gentleman, then, find no other reason why Christ was followed by few of the Jews, but "because they were not infallible, like himself?" If this was the reason of it, then Christ condemned the Jews unjustly, when he told them, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin." John xv. 22. For the gentleman, out of his abundance of charity, has furnished them with a very good cloak to cover their sin, if his reason be good for any thing; and not only the unbelieving Jews, but pagans, Turks, deists, and atheists, are in a great measure excused in their disbelief of the Christian doctrine, because their being fallible men is not their fault. So that, if the gentleman and his true Protestant brethren had been amongst the Jews when our Savior told them "that they had no cloak to cover their sin," I presume they would have answered him that, since they were fallible men, they could have no infallible assurance that he was not

an impostor; and that, therefore, he could not reasonably charge them with sin for not believing his doctrine.

There were, however, some among the Jews who followed Christ; nay, a considerable number; for he appeared to about five hundred disciples at once; and these were as fallible as those who refused to follow him. It is, therefore, impertinent to say that this was the case in our Savior's time; as if the reason why the rest did not follow him was because, being fallible men, they had not a sufficient assurance of the infallible truth of his doctrine.

An infallible guide is therefore useless only to those who either will not find him, or, when found, be guided by him. But he may be found by all who seek him sincerely. The gentleman may find him if he pleases; for the marks whereby the true Church may be known and distinguished from all separate communions are so clear, that nothing but the same voluntary blindness that hindered the Jews from following Christ can hinder them from being seen, especially by men of learning.

As to what he adds, that, "when we have found our infallible guide, we may misunderstand him," I answer, 1st, that a fallible guide may be misunderstood as well as an infallible one; and, for my part, I would rather take my chance with one that cannot mislead me than one that can; for I am sure, at least, not to err, if I do not mistake his meaning; but, with a fallible guide, I may be misled even when I understand him best.

I answer, 2dly, by asking the gentleman whether it be morally possible for him to misunderstand the doctrine of his own fallible church contained in the thirty-nine articles of religion. For, if he tells me, as I presume he will, that it is morally impossible he should, what reason has he to entertain so mean an opinion of us as to think we do not understand our catechisms, in which the doctrine taught by our infallible guide is plainly and clearly delivered to us? For, in reality,

how is it possible we should mistake it? Am not I, for example, infallibly sure that my guide teaches me "that there is but one God, and three persons"? It is true, I cannot comprehend this mystery, because it is above my understanding; but I know, with an infallible assurance, that I am taught to believe it; and so it is morally impossible I should mistake my guide in any article of faith, as long as there are catechisms in being which deliver the doctrine of the Church in the plainest and easiest manner

CHAPTER V.

THE GENTLEMAN'S REASONS FOR PRIVATE JUDGMENT CONSIDERED.

Page 35, his lordship discourses in this manner: "We think it inconsistent with the goodness of God not to give men an infallible guide to lead them in the right way to heaven, since our own reason is so weak that we cannot trust to it; and that guide is the Church." I have nothing to say to his lordship's congruency, from its being inconsistent with the goodness of God not to give men an infallible guide; but the gentleman's answer to his last words is somewhat curious. "How do you know that?" says he. "What have you but your own reason to tell you so? And, if you cannot trust to your reason, you cannot believe the Church. So that all bottoms upon your own reason still, from which you strive in vain to escape." p. 35.

What wretched sophistry is this to be proposed as a serious argument in a dispute of the greatest importance! However, since there is a pretty jingle in it, which may easily impose upon a vulgar reader, let us allow it a short examination. His lordship says "his reason is too weak a guide to lead him in the right way to heaven;" whence he concludes "that he must depend upon the Church to guide him." The gentleman, to confute him, answers, "that, since he has nothing but his own reason to tell him that he must depend upon the Church, if he cannot trust his reason, he cannot believe the Church;" and that, by consequence, all bottoms upon reason.

But how easily might his lordship have replied, that he can safely trust his own reason when it tells him that he must believe the Church! because nothing is more consonant to reason than to depend upon a guide appointed by God himself. Thus far, therefore, reason directs us. But, when we have once found the true Church of Christ, which the most evident motives of credibility mark out to our reason, assisted by God's grace, then we have nothing else to do but to submit to her in every thing she teaches.

I therefore ask the gentleman whether we are bound to follow our reason when it tells us that we must believe the Church, or not. If not, then we must act contrary to reason, in not believing the Church when our reason tells us we ought to do it. But, if he says that we are bound to follow our reason when it tells us that we must believe the Church, then the gentleman is bound to do the very same; and so I hope we may come at last to make a convert of him; for then he is bound to be guided by and submit to the Church in every thing she teaches; nay, he is bound to it by the very light and direction of his own reason. And therefore, if this be his meaning when he concludes that all bottoms upon reason, I subscribe to it without hesitation. Nor will I ever strive to escape from my reason, when it demands so just and reasonable a thing of me as an entire submission and obedience to the judgment and authority of the Church.

However, I fear the gentleman is not disposed to follow reason directing him to believe the Church; for, in the following page, he tells us "that it would be blasphemy to say we believe a God upon any authority," (p. 36,) which I think is one of the most surprising propositions that ever dropped from the pen of a man in his right senses; and his proof of it is almost as surprising. "For that," says he, "would place such an authority above God." Yet, two lines after, he tells us "that we believe a God purely upon our own reason."

Now what a paradox is this! "To believe a God upon any authority is to place that authority above God;" and yet we may believe him purely upon our own reason, and, as I suppose, without any danger of placing our reason above him. But how can that be? For, if it be true that to believe a God upon any authority is to place that authority above him, it must be grounded upon this general principle, viz., that every motive upon which we believe any thing is above the thing believed; and then our reason will also be placed above God, when that is the motive of our belief of him. So that, according to the gentleman's logic, we must either believe a God without having any motive for it, either from authority or reason, or we become guilty of blasphemy if we have any motive for our belief of him. I hope, however, St. John's disciples were not guilty of blasphemy, or of placing their master above Christ, when they believed him to be the Messias upon St. John's authority.

He goes on thus (p. 36): "And it would be nonsense to believe it (the being of a God) either from the Church or Scriptures; because you can believe neither without first believing that there is a God." It follows, then, from this and the preceding passage, that, when the Scriptures or Church tells us that there is a God, we are guilty of blasphemy and nonsense if we believe either of them. However, I presume to answer the gentleman that there is neither blasphemy nor nonsense in believing that, upon the testimony of the Church or Scriptures, which I believed before upon natural evidence. Nay, children, till they are capable of understanding the demonstrative proofs of the being of a God, are bound to believe it upon the authority of their teachers, unless the gentleman will say they are bound to be atheists for some years, rather than believe it upon any authority.

He continues, again, (p. 36,) "And we cannot be more sure that there is a God, than we are persuaded of

the truth of those reasons upon which we do believe it." This I make bold to deny, if by the word *reason* the gentleman means pure natural evidence; because divine revelation, proposed by the Church, is a surer motive to believe it upon than all the evidence of human reason: which leads me to a clear answer to his following question: "If God has given us no other guide but our own reason to believe in himself, what further do we require for articles of less consequence?" For this question implies a false supposition, viz., that God has given us no other guide than our own reason to believe in himself. The supposition, I say, is false; because the Church and Scriptures, declaring it to be a revealed truth, furnish me with a much surer motive to believe it upon.

As to what the gentleman says, "that other articles are of less consequence," I hope he does not mean that the belief of the blessed Trinity, the incarnation, death, and resurrection, of our Savior Christ, is less necessary to salvation than the belief of a God; for, if he does, he must burn his "Christianity demonstrated," and the deists will be glad to have so great a man come over to their side. But, if the belief of those articles be equally necessary to salvation, as it certainly is, what reference has it to his purpose to say "they are of less consequence"? Can he infer, from thence, that we do not stand in need of any other guide than our own reason to believe them? For, supposing them to be of less consequence, are they, therefore, less obscure, or more within the reach of human reason? Will the gentleman pretend to demonstrate the Trinity, or hypostatic union of two natures in Christ, as he can demonstrate the existence of a God? Surely he will not pretend to it. And, if he cannot, it is certain we stand in need of a better guide than our own reason to believe them.

God has effectually given us a much surer guide, both to believe himself and other articles of faith, viz., the Church, guided by the divine Spirit, and led by him into all truth. So that the gentleman might have saved

himself the trouble both of repeating the same thing, (p. 46,) and exposing his experiment, as he calls it, (p. 30,) viz., "Whether we believe more firmly, and with greater assurance, what we have only from our own reason, or what we received upon the authority of the Church." For I answer him, without hesitation, that I believe every thing more firmly upon the authority of the Church, declaring it to be divinely revealed, than barely upon my own reason. And therefore, if I had no motive to believe the being of a God but purely upon my own reason, I should believe transubstantiation and purgatory with a much greater assurance than the being of a God; but, since I believe this also upon divine revelation, I have an equal certainty of all three, though no evidence but of the latter.

If the gentleman objects that, since there is a natural evidence of the being of a God, it follows that all religion bottoms upon reason, I answer, as before, that, if he means it in a sense which never was disputed by any Roman Catholic, I shall be far from ever pretending to dispute it with him. Nay, I allow him as much of reason as he pleases, provided it keeps within its own bounds, and presumes not to meddle with things that are above its reach; for, if it does, it must come under St. Paul's correction, commanding it "to be captivated unto the obedience of faith." 2 Cor. x. 5. And so I likewise agree very easily to what he says, (p. 46,) "that it is as impossible to believe any thing without our understanding as to see without our eyes;" for I hope, by the grace of God, we are not guilty of proceeding, in matters of religion, like irrational brutes without sense or reason, as the gentleman is pleased to insinuate; but there is a large difference between the use and abuse of our understanding. We use it as we ought, when we permit it to judge of its proper objects; but, if we let it run extravagant lengths, we may be as much deceived by it as if we should use our eyes to judge of sounds, or our ears of colors.

In a word, there is reasoning from authority as well as from natural principles; and we use our understanding in both, but with this difference — that, when we reason from authority, we reason with a deference and submission to the authority upon which we believe the truths proposed to us by it; and this belief, when it is grounded upon divine authority, is properly called *faith*. But, when we reason from natural principles, we are wholly guided by that light; and the assent we give to conclusions drawn from such principles is not faith, but science, or opinion; which renders the English word *belief* very equivocal, as I have already observed; because, in common use, it signifies any judgment or assent of the understanding, whether that judgment or assent be grounded upon clear evidence, probable arguments, or divine authority. In the two former, the understanding trusts wholly to its own light; but, in the latter, it acts dependently upon the direction of a superior guide, and pays a respectful submission to an authority established by God himself. For then it reasons in this manner: God has commanded us to believe the Church; but the Church teaches (for example) that there are three distinct persons in one divine nature; therefore we are bound to believe it, whether we understand it or not.

Here is both using and submitting our reason at once; nay, we reason ourselves into an entire submission. And, in this sense, we own "that it is as impossible to believe any thing without our understanding as to see without our eyes," because every act of belief is not only an act of the understanding, but over and above the result (virtually at least) of the fore-mentioned ratiocination; for it is upon the same principle we reason ourselves into a belief of all articles of faith; and therefore none can be said to proceed more rationally, or use their understanding to better purposes, than Roman Catholics. And if the gentleman, with all his flourishes upon reason, means no more, then all he says is but

beating the air, and making a show of disputing against us, when, in reality, he is but playing with words.

However, I suspect the gentleman is not willing to yield, that reason shall have no greater share in matters of faith than I allot it. For he asserts positively, (p. 46,) "That we must trust to private judgment in every thing without exception." This is a bold stroke indeed, and the gentleman will not be rewarded according to his merits, if he be not made president of the society of freethinkers for it. For I defy the author himself of the discourse of freethinking to say more for it, in so few words, than is expressed in this short sentence "We must trust to private judgment in every thing without exception." More, I say, cannot be said for it in so few words, if the gentleman may be allowed to be his own interpreter. For the words immediately before are these: "Private judgment is all we have for the belief of a God, or of Christ; and, by your own confession, (speaking to his lordship,) for the choice of a Church. And then we may also trust to it in smaller matters." Then he concludes with this noble epiphonema: "In short, we must trust to it in every thing without exception."

Now, joining this with the foregoing words, his meaning can be no other than that, as private judgment is all we have (according to his doctrine) for the belief of God, or of Christ, so it is all we have to trust to in every thing without exception; and, by consequence, private judgment is to be our only guide in all matters of religion whatsoever — which if it be not effectually establishing the doctrine of freethinking, I am yet to seek what the word freethinking means.

But who could have imagined that the gentleman, who, but a few years ago, was as great an enemy to private judgment as any Papist in the world, should all on a sudden grow so fond of it, as to trust to it without exception in all the nearest concerns of his soul's salvation? Let us hear his character of it in his "Christianity

demonstrated," pp. 181, 182. "The effects," says he, "of private judgment are these: multiplicity of sects and opinions; perpetual wranglings, without any umpire or judge of controversy. Whence come inveterate prejudices against each other, animosities, strifes, envyings, and all the wars of religion, which the most of any embroils the peace of the world, and is always the chief pretence of the civil wars of nations within themselves, and most commonly in the wars of kingdoms against kingdoms," &c.

What a frightful character is this! What a hideous monster have we here before us! Could any Papist have painted private judgment in blacker colors? And, indeed, the gentleman has but done it justice. Yet, by a wonderful metamorphosis, this monster is now become so charming in his eyes, that he declares we must have an entire confidence in it, and trust to it in every thing without exception. This looks, indeed, something like a contradiction. But we must consider that, in his "Christianity demonstrated," the gentleman wrote against the deists, and in his "Case stated," against the Papists; and is it reasonable to oblige a man to fight with the same arms against all sorts of enemies? By no means. For I would argue from different principles against an atheist and a Protestant; but those principles should not be contradictory, nor destroy one another. For surely some care ought to be taken that what is called *black*, against one, be not called *white*, against another. Because principles are eternal truths, always the same, and unchangeable in their nature. So that, if private judgment in matters of religion was such a hideous monster when the gentleman wrote his book against the deists, I cannot imagine how it became so useful and necessary, when he wrote his "Case stated."

We must, however, own that this self-denying way of writing shows plainly the great convenience of having no principles of one's own; because it gives a man a kind of title to all principles whatsoever. Thus, when

Protestants dispute against the Socinians, private judgment is damned to the lowest pit of hell, and nothing preached up but authority, and submission to it. But when Popery is to be run down, then private judgment is the only doctrine in the world, and we must trust to it in every thing without exception. In this manner, our adversaries come doubly armed into the field. They can change their weapons as they find occasion, and in a trice turn Papists against Socinians, and Socinians or freethinkers against Papists.

However, as the gentleman has written a great deal, he might easily forget, in writing his "Case stated," what he wrote in his "Christianity demonstrated." For a man is not bound to remember every thing he doeth. But what surprises me very much, is, that he has no sooner laid down the principle, viz., "that we must trust to private judgment in every thing without exception," but his memory seems to fail him, even before his ink could be well dry upon his paper, and he writes as follows: "My reason tells me that there must be many things in the nature of God which I cannot understand or explain. Because he is infinite and incomprehensible. And these I take purely upon revelation that is given of them in the Holy Scriptures. For my own reason could never have found them out, nor can perfectly understand them." p. 47.

What! Was it not his reason which told him, (p. 46,) "that we must trust to private judgment in every thing without exception"? And did the same reason tell him, (p. 47,) "that there are many things which must be taken purely upon revelation"? Could reason tell him, one minute, "that private judgment is to be trusted in every thing," and give itself the lie, in the very next, by telling him, "that there are many things in the nature of God which we can neither find out, nor understand, nor explain"? Or is private judgment to be trusted in things which can neither be found out, nor understood, nor explained by us? I assure the

gentleman, that, if his treacherous reason was guilty of betraying him into such manifest contradictions, it ought to be a warning to him never to trust to it any more as long as he lives.

But I hope these slips will render the gentleman truly sensible that private judgment is not to be trusted to in matters of revealed religion, much less in every thing without exception; but that, on the contrary, it is the most deceitful guide we can follow, and will certainly lead us into innumerable errors, if we trust to it in every thing. Private judgment is truly what the gentleman has described it in his "Christianity demonstrated." It deserves no better character. It is the fruitful mother of multiplicity of sects and opinions, and all the other mischiefs mentioned by him. And therefore God has given us a better guide — to wit, his holy Church, assisted by the divine Spirit, and led by him into all truth. Whoever follows this guide cannot err.

CHAPTER VI.

HIS ARGUMENT FROM THE FAILURE OF THE JEWISH CHURCH ANSWERED.

I come now to his argument from the defection of the Jewish church, which lies so scattered up and down that it is not very easy to bring it into any form or method. However, I shall do my best to set it in the clearest and strongest light; that my answer to it may be both easily understood and give full satisfaction. Now, the chief strength of his argument from the defection of the Jewish church depends upon the truth of the following proposition: "There is no more promise of infallibility to the one state of the church than to the other," (p. 45,) that is, to the Christian than Jewish church. If the gentleman can make this out, I own he will do something. But before he had laid this foundation, he discourses thus at random (p. 28): "The Jewish church was the only visible church of God upon earth; and if the promise made to her can fail, in vain does the Church of Rome, or even the whole Gentile church, claim these promises as undefeasible and unalterable to her. For if promises made to the whole church of God upon earth can fail at one time, they may likewise at another."

Before I can digest this confused heap of words into any form of argumentation, with the capital proposition at the head of it, I must first clear it of the rubbish thrown in amongst it. For, in the first place, why does the gentleman say the Church of Rome, or even the whole Gentile church? This is the old equivocation;

for the question is concerning the Christian church — that is, the Church established upon earth by Christ, of which the particular church or diocese of Rome is but a part; and the converted Jews, as well as Gentiles, are members of it, and make up but one Church. But this little equivocation, of which he is very fond, served to keep out of sight the true state of the question, which is always an advantage to a bad cause. I will, therefore, for clearness' sake, and to avoid equivocation, call her the Christian Church, in opposition to the fallen church of the Jews.

Secondly, I find it twice repeated, "that the Jewish church was the only or whole visible church of God upon earth." If the gentleman had said, it was the only visible national church of God upon earth, he would have come nearer to the truth. However, though this be a thing of no consequence, it is not an improbable guess, that the Eastern kings, who came to adore Christ, were the heads and rulers of a people that worshipped the true God and expected the Messias. For the common people generally follow the example of their governors and leaders; and so there might even be another little national church of God besides that of the Jews.

Having thus cleared the aforesaid sentence of the unnecessary lumber that clogged it, the remaining part, joined to the capital proposition, may be brought into some order and formed into a kind of syllogism, thus: "There is no more promise of infallibility to the Christian than to the Jewish church; but, notwithstanding those promises, the Jewish church failed; therefore, the Christian church may also fail; and by consequence is not infallible." I think the gentleman cannot say but I have set his principal argument in so just and clear a light that the whole force of it may be seen at a single view. But I would gladly know where he learned this wonderful doctrine, that the Christian Church has no more promise of infallibility than the Jewish church formerly had. Or, to express it in his own words, "that there is no

more promise of infallibility to the one state of the church than to the other."

I have already quoted St. Austin for the contrary opinion, teaching expressly, against the Donatists, (L. de Unit. Eccl. c. 13,) that, from the failure of the old church, "which had not the evangelical promise made to her," no consequence can be drawn to prove the failure of the present Church. "For now there is a Mediator of a better covenant, which is established upon better promises." Heb. viii. 6. So that if this capital proposition, viz. "That there is no more promise of infallibility to the one state of the Church than to the other;" if this, I say, be false, as it certainly is, the very foundation of the argument is unfounded.

I therefore ask the gentleman whether the evangelical promises were made to Jews or Christians. Was it of the Jewish church Christ spoke, when he said to St. Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it?" Matt. xvi. 18. Did our Savior address his discourse to the Jewish rabbins, or to the apostles, when he pronounced these sacred words: "I will ask my Father, and he will send you another comforter, to abide with you forever"? John xiv. 16. "The comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom my Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you." John xiv. 26. "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will lead you into all truth." John xvi. 13. "Lo, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Matt. xxviii. 20. What does the gentleman think of all these promises? They all tend to the same end: they are all made to the Christian Church, and none of them to the Jewish. So that I hope he will abate something of his confidence, and tell us no more, "that there is no more promise of infallibility to the one state of the Church than to the other."

Nay, I press him still further, and desire him to pro-

duce so much as one single promise of infallibility made to the Jewish church. He has but two texts tending to that purpose, in his "Case stated;" the first out of Mal. ii. 7, which (as he owns himself) only declares what the Jewish priests should be, but not what they really were: neither have the words of Malachy, as translated in the Protestant Bible, any thing of the form of a promise. And as to the second, out of Isa. lix. 21, I have already as good as demonstrated, that it belongs wholly to the Christian Church. But if he will not yield to my reasons, I hope he will at least have some deference for the great oracle of the *reformation*, John Calvin, who understood that text of the preaching of God's heavenly doctrine. (L. I. Inst. c. 9.) So that, here we have one promise more to the Christian Church, in which the Jewish church was not the least concerned.

If the gentleman asks me, whether then the Jewish church was infallible, or not, — I answer, many Catholic divines hold she was; and they ground themselves mostly upon this, because God obliged the Jews, upon pain of death, to submit to her decisions. However, the same divines teach that her infallibility was not to be perpetual, like that of the Christian Church; but, on the contrary, that at the coming of the Messiah it was to cease, as the dim light of the moon and stars disappears when the sun rises.

I answer, 2dly, that, whatever infallibility the Jewish church had bestowed on her, she had it not by virtue of any express promise made to her; for God can bestow his favors without binding himself to it by any formal promise. But, the Jews being God's chosen people for the sake of his great servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of whose race the Redeemer of mankind was to be born, he favored their church with a particular protection; until their ingratitude and wickedness being come up to its full measure, he abandoned them to the blindness of their own hearts, and permitted

them to reject, to persecute, and even to crucify, he Messias.

Now, all these great events were so clearly foretold by the prophets, that it seems morally impossible that they who made it their business to study the law should mistake their meaning. And, therefore, supposing now that the Jews had their promises of infallibility, (for the thing is not at all material,) they could not possibly believe that it was to be perpetual and indefeasible, though the gentleman will needs persuade us that this was their belief; and, to maintain this opinion, for which he stickles, *tooth and nail*, he tells us, though without any manner of proof, "that the Jews did not understand against themselves the prophecies which foretold their rejecting the Messias," (p. 45,) but depended, forsooth, upon promises of perpetual infallibility; for which they are entirely beholden to the gentleman's liberality.

But here I should be glad to know, how he came by this new light in writing his "Case stated," since, when he wrote his "Christianity demonstrated," he was of a contrary opinion, and thought as others do. For I cannot but own, that the gentleman has his happy moments of thinking and writing as justly as any man in the world; as will appear in his "Christianity demonstrated," (p. 99,) where, after having mentioned the prophecies concerning the resurrection, passion, and death of the Messias, he says, "that, before the coming of Christ, the Jews understood those texts, as we do, to be certainly meant of the Messias, and of none other." But, since that time, they have forced themselves to put the most strained and contradictory meaning upon them.

This is certainly true; but how will it agree with what the gentleman writes in his "Case stated"? For whoever forces himself to put the most strained and contradictory meaning upon any text, is certainly conscious to himself that the meaning he puts upon it is not the true one, and that himself believes it not in his

heart, though he affirms it in words. Besides, the Jews knew very well, how their church had understood those texts before the coming of Christ; either, therefore, they believed her to be infallible or not: if not, the gentleman's argument runs entirely upon a false supposition; if they did, then they could not but understand them as their forefathers had done. Whence it plainly follows, that, even at the time when the Jews rejected Christ, though they stifled, as much as they could, the lights they had, (as hardened sinners are wont to do,) yet they understood perfectly well the prophecies which foretold their rejecting the Messias, and, by consequence, they could not believe that their infallibility was to be perpetual and indefeasible, as the gentleman will needs persuade us.

Now, this will fully answer what he says, (p. 46,) viz., "that, at the time when Christ was rejected by the Jewish church, it was impossible for any Jew to become a Christian upon the foot of the authority of the church;" for at that time a Jew might be confuted (I will not say converted) from the principles of his own church; because it might be demonstrated to him, that, according to the prophecies, as formerly understood by his own church, she was to forfeit her infallibility at the coming of the Messias; that therefore she was not to be depended upon, or believed in any thing she should teach against Jesus of Nazareth, who had all the marks that were ever foretold of the true Messias, whether relating to his family, the place of his birth, the time of his coming, his miracles, or any circumstances whatsoever; that if the scribes and Pharisees interpreted the prophecies otherwise than his church had formerly done, it was out of malice, and to be revenged of Christ, who had detected and censured their vices; that, therefore, they "forced themselves to put the most strained and contradictory meanings upon them;" finally, that all the violent proceedings of the scribes and Pharisees against him were but a fulfilling

of the prophecies, as formerly understood by his own church.

This, I think, I may call a full confutation of any Jew, even upon the foot of the authority of his own church; and, by consequence, the gentleman is very much out in saying, "that, at the time that Christ was rejected by the Jewish church, it was impossible for any Jew to become a Christian upon the foot of that authority."

Thus his principal argument falls to the ground. But he takes it up again, (pp. 64, 65,) where he discourses in the following manner: "If the Christian Church," says he, "was not formed till after the descent of the Holy Ghost, it will follow, that the Jewish church was the only true church whilst Christ lived in the world. For the Jewish church was to last till the Christian Church was formed, else there was no church at all, after Christ came, till Pentecost. And then it would follow, that the only true Church in the world did reject Christ. And then there would be no choice left, but either to acknowledge the fallibility of the Church, or to reject Christ from being the Messias. But, if the Christian Church was formed at any time before his passion, then the whole Church failed upon his death."

Here the gentleman thinks he has got us fast between the horns of a dilemma; but they are too short to reach us. I answer him, therefore, directly, that the Christian Church was formed as soon as Christ had a visible congregation of persons believing in him; and this was not only before Pentecost, but before he was openly rejected by the Jews. And so his first consequence comes to nothing, viz, "that the only true Church in the world did reject Christ." For the Christian Church was then the true Church, and Christ was never rejected by her.

I hope the gentleman will not question but that the Christian was the true one as soon as she was formed

It remains, then, only to show that she was formed before the Jews openly rejected Christ, which I prove thus: the Christian Church is a visible congregation of persons believing in Christ; but there was such a congregation before he was rejected by the Jews, as is manifest from what St. Matthew relates concerning his first Sermon on the Mount; where, besides the apostles, who certainly believed in him, there was a great multitude of people present. And the evangelist expressly tells us, "that the people were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Matt. vii. 28, 29. "And when he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him." Matt. viii. 1. So that here was a visible congregation enlightened by God to believe the true faith, which constitutes the essence of a church. And, by consequence, the Christian Church was formed before that of the Jews rejected Christ.

It is true, indeed, that, though she was formed before, and had all the essentials of a church, she had not her full beauty, strength, and perfection, immediately communicated to her. For spiritual operations proceed gradually, like those of nature. And therefore, as a child newly born, though he has all the essentials of human nature, yet becomes not perfect man till many years after,—it was just so with the Christian Church, when she was first gathered. She was then in her infancy; Christ nursed her, and fed her with such doctrine as his infinite wisdom knew to be best suited to her state, but left the finishing part to the coming of the Holy Ghost, who was not only to bring all things to her remembrance, whatever Christ had said to her, (John xiv 26,) but to teach her many truths which were too solid meat for an infant. For which reason, he said to his apostles, even at his last supper, when they had been already instructed by him for the space of three years, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when

the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." John xvi. 12, 13. For it was then that the evangelical doctrine was to be preached every where; that nations were to flock unto the Church of Christ; that grace was to abound where sin had abounded; and many mysteries, which before had been wrapped up in dark figures, were to be unfolded and set in the clear light of the gospel.

But as the Christian Church was then in her infancy, so was the Jewish church in her declining age, and upon the decay. The Spirit of God, which had conducted her for many ages, was upon the point of departing from her, as the prophets had foretold. However, the law of Moses, though drawing towards its end, was not yet perfectly dead (as divines speak) till the death of Christ, which consummated the prophecies concerning him. Neither was it mortiferous, (if I may be allowed to use that word,) that is, unlawful to be practised, till many years after, as appears from St. Paul's circumcising his disciple Timothy; because the synagogue (as the holy fathers speak) was to be buried with honor, and a due respect to be paid to it for a time.

But if it be objected, that, according to this system, there were two true churches at once, viz., the synagogue and the Christian Church, — I answer, that there was but one true Church, namely, the Church of Christ; which included not only those who believed in him explicitly, but likewise all those of the synagogue, who in their hearts were sincerely disposed to do it. So that Jews and Christians were not then two appellations incapable of being joined in the same person, as now, but all the faithful might then have been called either Jews or Christians, with different respects — Jews, with reference to the Mosaic law, which was yet fully in force, and observed by Christ himself and his apostles; and Christians, as they were members of that mystical body, whereof Christ was then the visible head upon earth. And though this mystical body and congregation of the

faithful, united under Christ as head, had not then the denomination of the Christian Church, nor were the faithful called Christians till some years after the preaching of the gospel, yet she was truly and properly the Christian Church, when Christ himself, her head and founder, was visibly present to her, and formed and governed her in person.

Hence it follows, that those among the Jews who remained sound in their ancient faith, and had no hand in the death of the Messias, but believed in Christ according to the tenor of the Mosaic law, were truly members of his mystical body, and within the pale of his holy Church. For, though they had not an explicit faith that the Messias was actually come, (because it was not yet sufficiently declared to all,) yet they had an implicit faith of it, as being prepared in their hearts to believe and profess it explicitly whenever it should be sufficiently proposed to them. This was certainly the case of many among the common people of the Jews, and is even now the case of many ignorant Christians in reference to several speculative points of faith; which they cannot believe explicitly, because they are wholly ignorant of them: yet this hinders not but that their faith is entire, because they believe implicitly in their hearts whatever the Church teaches; which suffices to keep them within the pale and render them true members of Christ's mystical body.

Now, this will help us to a full and clear answer to the second part of the dilemma, viz., "that if the Church was formed at any time before our Savior's passion, then the whole Church failed upon his death," which shall be fully examined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

WHETHER THE CHURCH FAILED AT THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

I OBSERVE the gentleman is not disposed to show any favor to the apostles; for (p. 32) he will not allow them to have been infallible, even after the descent of the Holy Ghost: and now we shall see him so ungenerous as to call to a very strict account their behavior at a time when their hearts were oppressed with grief, their spirits sunk, and their imaginations disturbed with fears of what might happen to them, from the malice and cruelty of the Jews, whereof they saw the most dismal effects in the person of their dear Lord and Master. Under these disadvantages, the gentleman attacks them, and triumphs in their imaginary fall; though, according to his own calculation, it lasted but for two or three days; which shows how ready he is to catch at any twig to support a sinking cause; and if he can but say something to run down the Church's infallibility, he is glad to play the very smallest game rather than stick out.

However, though it were true that the whole Christian Church fell at the time he pretends, it makes nothing against her infallibility as established upon the foot of the promises which are the foundation of it, but only shows that she might fall before those promises were in force; and so, though it be true, and I agree heartily to what he says, (p. 61,) "that the promises of God can never fail, no, not for one moment," it is nothing at all to the purpose, nor can he conclude any thing

from it against us. For can a promise be said to fail, any more than a law to be broken, before it begins to be in force? Now, the promises made to the Christian Church were not to begin to be in force till after the descent of the Holy Ghost, as the very words of those promises, which relate to the means by which she was to become infallible, expressly import. So that her charter of indefectibility bears date precisely from that time forward; and since the gentleman is so very nice upon the matter as to count days, hours, nay, moments, — if he can mark me out one single day, hour, or moment, in which she failed since that time, I am ready to yield up the cause. But I hope to make it out plainly, that, even in that time of darkness and general consternation, when the earth trembled, rocks were torn asunder, the dead rose out of their graves, and all nature seemed to be in convulsions, God, like a tender father, took such effectual care of his infant Church, that her faith, though eclipsed by the suffering, the death, and absence of her head, was not extinguished in the hearts either of his apostles or disciples.

But how does the gentleman go about to prove her fall? He tells us, (p. 61,) "that of the apostles, one betrayed him, another forswore him, all forsook him." Very good. All this I own; and therefore, as to Judas, who betrayed him, I give him freely up. But as to St. Peter, and the other apostles, I will not part with them upon such easy terms. St. Peter, indeed, denied Christ in words; but the bitter tears of repentance he shed the very moment after show plainly that the foundation was sound, and that it was not want of faith, but of courage to profess it, that surprised him into the crime with which he stands charged. And this agrees exactly with what our Savior said to him but a little before: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke xxii. 32. Here his fall is foretold, but his faith secured; and as to the other apostles, who forsook their

Master, they were cowards indeed, but no apostates, with the gentleman's good leave.

But what becomes now of their faith during the short interval between our Savior's death and resurrection? Here the gentleman thinks to make sure work of them, and I must do him the justice to own that he has said as much for a bad cause as it will bear. I hope, however, to bring them off safe and sound in their faith, though the gentleman will by no means allow it; and he gives this reason for it, "because they believed not that Christ was to rise again from the dead." Which he proves from this text: "For as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that he must rise again from the dead." John xx. 9. But is there no difference between inculpable ignorance and the crime of incredulity? The text he quotes is so far from making any thing against the apostles, that it is their best defence. "They knew not the Scriptures, that he was to rise again from the dead;" and would he oblige them to believe a fact, before they knew any thing of it? That is very hard. For, at that rate, many thousands of Christians who are truly in the bosom of the Catholic Church, yet being ignorant of several speculative articles of faith, would be heretics for not having a distinct belief of things they know nothing of.

Besides, if the apostles were guilty of incredulity, or erred in faith, at the death of our Savior, for not believing his future resurrection, they were still more guilty even whilst he lived. For then they had also no belief of his future death and passion, which, without all dispute, they believed very firmly, when they saw him dead with their own eyes. Now, that they had no belief of his future death whilst he lived, is manifest from the 18th chapter of St. Luke, where our Savior foretells the chief particulars of the death he was to suffer, and that he was to rise again the third day. But the evangelist adds, "And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hidden from them, neither knew they the

things which were spoken." Luke xviii. 34. And will the gentleman say that the apostles were infidels all the time they were with Christ? and this because they did not understand the things that were said to them? The contrary ought rather to be inferred; for, if they had known what he meant, they would undoubtedly have believed it.

But if we now examine how it came to pass that they should not understand things so clearly delivered them, the most probable reason I can give for it is, because they were not only naturally dull and stupid, (of which our Savior complained sometimes, to let us know what contemptible instruments he had chosen,) but their hearts and thoughts were yet far from being perfectly purged of the old Jewish leaven. They believed indeed that Christ was the Son of God, and the true Messias, (which were the two essential points,) but they imagined that the Messias was to be a glorious king on earth, for they had as yet no notion of a spiritual kingdom; and, in consequence to this imagination, they also fancied that, as Messias, he was to redeem Israel by delivering the Jews from the yoke and tyranny of the Romans; and that, when this was done, he was to be their king, and they were to be great men under him; for so the apostles understood these words of Christ, "Verily I say unto you, that you who have followed in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in his throne of majesty, you shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matt. xix. 28. And this is further confirmed from the contentions they had sometimes about superiority, and the ambitious request of the mother of Zebedee's children: "Grant these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom." Matt. xx. 21. So that, being strongly possessed with this fancy, which agreeably flattered their ambition, whatever thwarted it directly could not enter into their heads; and so what Christ said of ignominy, sufferings, or death, and by consequence of rising from

the dead, was a language they understood nothing of, as being inconsistent with the notions they had of seeing him a great and glorious king.

Now, this explains the true meaning of what the two disciples of Emaus said to Christ, from which the gentleman chiefly draws his consequences against the Church: "We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel." Luke xxiv. 21. For they meant, according to the dulness of their understanding and the gross ideas they had, that they trusted that Christ would have delivered them from their servile subjection to a foreign power. "But now he was dead," as the gentleman remarks very justly, (p. 61,) "all their hopes were gone; they expected no redemption from him." No such redemption, I dare say. And he concludes very smartly in this manner: "This was far from a Christian faith: and could there be a Christian Church without this faith?" Yes; surely the Christian Church could subsist without believing that Christ was to conquer the Romans, or restore liberty to the Jews. Nor was the disbelief of such a redemption any ways prejudicial to the Christian faith. On the contrary, it was only disabusing them of a mistake, which, though not criminal in them, yet was to be removed in order to make way for the spiritual truths of the gospel. And therefore our Savior began immediately to instruct them, saying, "Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and so enter into his glory?" Luke xxiv. 26. As if he should say, "My kingdom is not of this world, as you imagined. I was born to suffer and die for you, as the prophets have foretold; and it is thus I come to redeem Israel from the bondage of sin, and slavery of the devil." This opened their eyes and inflamed their hearts, as they said afterwards to one another, "Did not our hearts burn within us by the way, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" Luke xxiv. 32.

Thus, then, we see what their error was whilst our Savior lived, and how they were cured of it by his

death; which, therefore, is a clear answer to the gentleman's question, "And what faith could they have in him whom they had quite given over, and never expected to see him more?" For how did they give him over? What does he mean by it? Has he the boldness to say that, when the apostles and disciples saw Christ dead, they believed him to have been a cheat and impostor? For one of these two must be: they either believed him to be the Son of God, and the true Messias foretold by the prophets, or, if they had not this faith in him, they could frame no other judgment of him than that he was a rank impostor.

The reason hereof is unanswerable; because he had frequently declared himself to be the Son of God and true Messias; and, when St. Peter made that noble profession of faith, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, (Matt. xvi. 16,) our Savior answered, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." If, therefore, the apostles, when they saw him dead, did not believe him to be the Son of God, as he had taught them, it follows that they judged him to be an impostor who had seduced them, which I presume the gentleman dares not say; and, if they believed him to be the Son of God and the true Messias, pray where was there any failure in their faith? Or what sense, that makes any thing to the purpose, can he give to this dark expression, that "they had quite given him over"? He ought rather to have said that they had given over their own vain fancies of becoming great judges and ministers of state; for that is all the change I know of which his death made in their belief. They left off building castles in the air, and saw plainly how little they had understood many things our Savior had told them. But, as to the Christian faith, it remained *in statu quo;* that is, they believed Christ to be the Son of God and the true Messias; which, as I have already remarked, were the two essential points, at least in reference to those to whom

they had been sufficiently declared. In consequence to this faith, they believed, in general, that whatever he had said was certainly true; and so they had an implicit faith of every thing, whether they understood it or not.

Hence it follows that, whether they expected to see or not see him again, (upon which the gentleman lays a great stress,) since they believed him to be the true Messias, they also had an implicit belief that Israel was to be redeemed by him; but in what manner, or by what means, "this saying was hid from them." Luke xviii. 34.

They knew nothing of the matter. They only found their former notions were wrong, but had not yet received any new light to guide themselves by; and, as to Christ's future resurrection, they neither believed nor disbelieved it positively; but it was to them as a thing they had never heard spoken of; and so they had no manner of idea of it, no more than they had of his dying whilst he was yet alive. Nor was it necessary they should. Christ took care to clear every thing in its due time, as he did the great article of his resurrection on the very day it happened, as I shall show immediately.

But we may truly say that, during the time of Christ's being in the sepulchre, the condition of the apostles was much the same as that of Abraham, when God commanded him to sacrifice his son Isaac. For Abraham believed firmly, on the one hand, that all nations were to be blessed in that very son; and he had no thought, on the other, but to obey the command which God had laid upon him. And how could these two things be reconciled together? According to the gentleman's way of arguing, Abraham could have no faith in God after he had received his command of sacrificing his son, and was resolved to obey it punctually. "For," to use the gentleman's own expression, "what faith could he have in God's promise that all nations were to be blessed in his Son's seed," when he had but three days

more to live, and was, by consequence, "given quite over by his father, who never expected to see him more"? But St. Paul has cleared the difficulty, by saying, for us, "that Abraham against hope trusted in hope." And so did the apostles, when they saw Christ dead. "Against hope they trusted in hope." It was not their business to examine how he would perform the part of a Messias, no more than it was Abraham's business to inquire how God would make good his promise. But they were sure he would do it; and that sufficed to secure the faith of the apostles, though they knew nothing whether they should or should not see Christ any more on earth; as Abraham knew not whether he should ever see his son alive after the three days were expired.

Now, let us consider how the faith of the Church stood, immediately after our Savior's resurrection. For I hope to give a very good account of it by only setting down the particulars of his apparitions on the very day he rose, as they are related in the Gospels.

St. John, then, tells us that Christ "appeared first early in the morning to Mary Magdalen alone." St. Luke adds that one Joanna, and Mary, the mother of James, and other women, joined her soon after; and, as they were coming back together, St. Matthew relates that Christ appeared to the whole company, saying to them, "All hail!"

The very same day, *ipsa die*, according to St. Luke, he manifested himself to the two disciples of Emaus, who, as soon as Christ disappeared, returned immediately to Jerusalem, where they found the eleven, that is, all the apostles, assembled together with several disciples, saying to them, as they entered, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon." Luke xxiv. 34. Then they began to relate what had happened to them upon their way to Emaus; though St. Mark takes notice that they were not believed by the assembly, no more than the woman had been believed before.

But full credit was given to the report of Simon, as is evident from their saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon." So that they really believed the fact, though not upon the authority of the woman, or the two disciples. I presume they did not think themselves bound to have that regard to their testimony; and perhaps there was something of jealousy in their hearts, imagining it to be a reflection upon them that Christ should appear to the woman, and those two disciples, sooner than to them.

But St. Thomas, who was singular in his incredulity, proceeded still further; for he had not even patience to hear out their relation, but left the company very abruptly before they could make an end of it, as will appear from the following particulars related by St. Luke and St. John. For St. Luke (xxiv. 36) tells us "that, whilst the two disciples were yet speaking, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them." And St. John marks expressly "that Thomas was not there," (John xx. 24,) whereas he was certainly with them when the two disciples first came in; because St. Luke tells us positively that they found "the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them." Luke xxiv. 33. And it is likewise incontestable that St. Luke and St. John speak of the same apparition, as will appear from these words of St. John: "Mary Magdalen came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord . . . . . Then, the same day at evening, the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst." John xx. 18, 19. For here we see these two evangelists agree exactly in the two most material circumstances, to wit, of the day and the time of the day in which this apparition happened. The day, according to both evangelists, was the very same that Christ had appeared to St. Mary Magdalen, and that was the very day of the resurrection; and the time of the day was in the evening, as St. John says in express words; and St.

Luke, by specifying that it was after the two disciples, whom our Savior met "when the day was far spent," (Luke xxiv. 29,) were come back from Emaus to Jerusalem.

But I have omitted one circumstance very material, and related by St. John, (xx. 1, 2, 3, &c.,) viz., that St. Mary Magdalen, perceiving the stone of the sepulchre removed, and thereupon running to call Peter and John, as soon as they entered in, and saw that the body of Christ was not there, the evangelist tells us, of himself, that he saw and believed; and I think we may very rationally suppose the same of St. Peter, though he be not expressly mentioned. The evangelist adds, "Then the disciples went again to their own home." verse 10.

Now, from all these circumstances, which are faithfully collected from the Gospels, it follows, 1st. That St. Mary Magdalen, with the other holy women who were with her, believed the resurrection early in the morning. 2dly. That St. Peter and St. John also believed it even before Christ appeared to any; for he did not appear to St. Mary Magdalen till after they were gone home, leaving her alone at the sepulchre. 3dly. That Christ appeared the same day to St. Peter, though the time or place of that apparition is not specified in any of the Gospels; only we are sure it was before the apostles were assembled together. 4thly. That the other apostles and disciples (St. Thomas alone excepted) believed it also upon the testimony of St. Peter, before Christ appeared to them; because the two disciples of Emaus were no sooner entered in amongst them, but they were saluted with the joyful news, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon."

Lastly, it follows that what the gentleman says concerning the total defection of the Christian Church is a fiction all over; and that, by consequence, we are far from being reduced to the miserable shift of preserving the Church in a single woman or laic. And, if the Catholic divines quoted by him (p. 62) were really of

this opinion, (for I never thought it worth my pains to examine into the truth of it,) all I have to say is, that men who write a great deal are apt to nod sometimes, or have not leisure enough to be exact in every thing. This happens to the best and greatest authors; and the gentleman himself is a remarkable instance of it, in the many unwarrantable assertions scattered up and down in his book. I still suppose he has quoted them fairly; for, since the author of the "Church of Christ showed," &c., has proved him not to be over-scrupulous in his quotations, I cannot make him the compliment to tell him I believe it upon his authority; and I am apt to think the gentleman himself has taken it upon trust.

But, suppose it were now strictly true that the two disciples of Emaus failed in their faith, on which the gentleman lays the greatest stress of his argument; does it therefore follow that the whole Church fell? I think not. For where do we read that either Joseph of Arimathea, or Nicodemus, or Nathaniel, or Lazarus, or any of the holy women fell from their faith? Or where is it written that those multitudes which followed Christ turned all apostates at his death? "Five thousand at once, besides women, and children, followed him into the desert." Matt. iv. 24. "At the very beginning his fame went through all Syria. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." 24, 25. "And many of the Samaritans believed in him." John vii. 31. So that, unless the gentleman can prove from evident texts of Scripture (as I am sure he cannot) that all these, or even the greatest part of them apostatized at the death of Christ, the fall of two disciples, or even of the apostles themselves, will come very short of proving that the whole Church fell.

I shall conclude this chapter with reminding the gentleman of what I have already told him, viz., that, allowing it to be true that the whole Christian Church failed at the time he pretends, it makes nothing against her

infallibility as grounded upon the promises of Christ. And therefore I may grant him every thing he has labored to prove, in reference to that particular fact, without any prejudice to my cause. For the question between us is not concerning the condition of the Church before she had the promised assistance of the Holy Ghost to lead her into all truth, but whether she has been a fallible or infallible Church since her establishment upon the foot of the promises. So that whatever happened to her before that time is wholly foreign to the question. And though I have given myself the trouble to prove that she failed not even then, the issue of the cause depends not in the least upon it. But the only motive that induced me to it was to do justice to the blessed apostles, whom I think the gentleman has wronged. I am sure it becomes a Christian much more to be the advocate than accuser of those great planters of the Christian faith, to whose indefatigable zeal and labors we are indebted, next to God, for all the blessings of religion, and advantages we enjoy above Jews and heathens; and are therefore bound, in gratitude, to show an inclination to extenuate their failings as far as is consistent with any appearance of truth, rather than a forwardness to aggravate every thing against them, and even strain the text to make them appear more guilty than they really were.

There remains now only one point more to be cleared, viz., where the infallibility is to be lodged, which shall be done in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FOUR PRETENDED CONTRADICTORY SCHEMES OF LODGING THE INFALLIBILITY EXAMINED.

In stating the four pretended contradictory schemes of lodging the infallibility, the gentleman has surely taken the greatest part of his notions upon trust, and without examination; for I scarce ever saw a greater number of mistakes crowded together in so small a compass.

He tells us, (p. 63,) that "there is no greater difference and confusion among any sort of men, upon any subject whatsoever, than there is among the divines of the Church of Rome concerning her rule of faith and infallible judge of controversy. And every one of the different opinions about it is in flat contradiction to all the others; so that if any one of them be true, all the rest must be false."

These few lines contain three positions equally false. The first, that "there is as great a difference and confusion among the divines of the Church of Rome, concerning their infallible judge of controversy, as among any sort of men upon any subject whatsoever."

The second, that "every one of the different opinions about it is in flat contradiction to all the others." And the third, which is an inference from the second, "That if any one of them be true, all the rest must be false."

Before I come to the examination of his four pretended contradictory schemes of lodging the infallibility, I shall say something to the first of these three propositions, which indeed is of so wild and large an extent,

that, to give a direct and full answer to it, I should be obliged to bring in a list not only of all the different sorts of men in the world, but of all the different sorts of disputes among them; and then show that there is a greater confusion at least among some of them, than there is among the divines of the Church of Rome concerning their infallible judge of controversy. But I shall presume upon the gentleman's leave not to undertake so tedious a work; and will content myself with producing one single instance to show that the difference and confusion, which is only imagined by the gentleman in the Church of Rome, is really and truly to be found in the *reformed* churches; and that in a point of such importance, that the very being of those churches depends upon it.

The point, I mean, concerning their mission, without which there can be no ministry or legal power of preaching the word or administering the sacraments. For whoever has not his mission, originally at least, from Christ himself, "enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but is a thief and robber." John x. 1. So that a mission and ministry originally derived from Christ, who is the door, is indispensably requisite to the very constitution of a true Church; and, by consequence, where there is no such mission or ministry, the very essential constituent of a true Church is wanting.

Now let us see the admirable harmony and agreement among true Protestant divines concerning this important point. If we travel to Geneva, there Theodore Beza (ad Tract. de Ministrorum Gradibus, ad cap. 2 L. 1.) will assure us, that the Protestant ministry is founded upon an extraordinary mission, and is not by any means to be derived from the Papists. In returning through France, we shall hear the same from the Huguenots in the 31st article of their Confession of Faith. In Germany, Martin Luther will likewise inform us, in a letter written to the Popish bishops, (Tom. 2, fol. 305,) that his mission was extraordinary, and by no means owing to the ordination he had received in the Roman Catholic

Church. And, indeed, it is ridiculous to pretend to have a mission from any church to teach and preach a doctrine contrary to the established doctrine of that very church.

But if we ask Luther's opinion concerning Munster's and Carlostadius's mission, he assures us, (Tom. 3, fol. 489,) that it cannot pass for an extraordinary one, because they showed no miracles to support it. And here Luther was certainly in the right; for we find the ancient fathers, from the like want of miracles, proved, against the heretics of their times, that they had no extraordinary mission. But as this want of miracles is an unanswerable argument against Carlostadius, even according to Luther's own doctrine, so it has the same force against Luther himself, against Calvin, and Zuinglius, and Bucer, and Peter Martyr, and Ochinus, and the whole new college of Protestant apostles; unless the schoolboy of Oxford's tale concerning the stone not falling upon Luther's head, as he was sitting upon the close-stool, is to pass for a miracle. Hist. of the Luth. Church, p. 17.

For this reason there are other eminent Protestants, as Du Moulin, Mr. Claude, Mr. Jurieux, and the divines of the Church of England, who declare for an ordinary mission; and Luther maintains the necessity of such a one against the Anabaptists.

And here again they run into disagreeing systems. Some, as Mr. Claude, to prove the Protestant mission and vocation to the ministry to be ordinary, think it sufficient to show that their first pastors were established by the people, in whom they place the source of authority and vocation. For Luther, and Calvin, and all the first *reformers*, having told the world, both in their particular writings and public synods, that the Church in communion with the bishop of Rome was the synagogue of Satan, and no part of the Church of Christ; and the primitive fathers expressly teaching, that from a false church no true mission or ministry can be derived,

these assertors of an ordinary mission thought it ridiculous to own their succession from the Roman Catholic Church, whose doctrines they opposed; and therefore maintained that every pastor who was chosen to the ministry by the people was duly sent in the ordinary way.

But others, who are convinced indeed of the necessity of an ordinary mission, but find that in all ages it was continued by the succession of bishops, who received ordination, not from the people, but from the bishops their immediate predecessors, are for maintaining the hierarchy of the Church, and assert that episcopacy is of divine institution, and that, where there are no bishops, there can be no ordination, nor, by consequence, any ministry. But then, as to the power of bishops to instruct and guide their flocks, some, as the Protestants in Sweden and Denmark, will have it depend on the superior consistory or meeting of the clergy; others, as Cranmer, on the prince's will and pleasure; and some again assert its independency on the civil power, which is now the opinion of many in England. But these are obliged to derive its channel from the Church of Rome, where it formerly ran in uninterrupted stream from St. Austin, the first bishop of Canterbury, to Cranmer, who betrayed it and all the Church's liberties into the hands of the secular power.

Here, I am sure, we have difference, confusion, and contradiction, with a witness; and that, too, in so essential a point (as I have already remarked) that the very constitution and being of the *reformed* churches is concerned in it. And which of these four systems will the gentleman now take — the ordinary or extraordinary mission? And if he choose the ordinary, will he have it derived from the secular or spiritual power? Let him choose what he pleases, he has three, or at least two, to one against him. "And all these [for I love to use the gentleman's own way of speaking] are of the reformed churches." So that I must here also beg leave to pro-

pose the same sort of question to him, as he put to his lord, — "And what difference is there between having no mission or ministry at all and one you cannot find?" And let me tell the gentleman, that, if the *reformed* Churches have neither lawful mission nor ministry, as it is very easy to show they have not, they are no true churches.

I have reason to think this will give some check to the boldness of that wild proposition of his, concerning the pretended difference and confusion among Catholic divines about their infallible judge. Though I am sensible I have given myself more trouble than I needed, by answering it directly, because the falsehood of it will be sufficiently demonstrated by that of the proposition immediately following, viz, that "every one of their opinions about it is in flat contradiction to all the others." For if I prove that this assertion is wholly void of truth, the consequence will be undeniable, that the other is so too.

In order, therefore, to prove the falsehood of the aforesaid assertion, I shall examine the opinions he speaks of, and show how unfairly they are represented by him, (pp. 92, 93, 94,) where he musters up all his strength to knock down his adversary, and sets forth four different schemes of placing the infallibility, maintained (as he pretends) by four different parties in the Church of Rome; and then concludes with this triumphant apostrophe: "And now, my lord, which of these four sorts of infallibility will you take? There are three to one against you; choose which you will, and all these are the Church of Rome. And what difference is there between having no guide and one you cannot find?" To which the noble advocate for the Church of Rome has not a word to answer; but gives up tamely the cause, confessing, "that, if he cannot find his guide, he has him not; and that is all as one as to have none."

However, I hope we are not so very much at a loss to find our infallible guide, as the gentleman imagines. I

will not quarrel with him for a little mistake in the wording of his question put to his lord. For he asks him "which of the four sorts of infallibility he will choose." Now, I know but one sort of infallibility we have been all this while disputing about; and the question he should have asked is, "where he would choose to lodge this infallibility." For it is precisely about the subject of this question that he charges the Church of Rome with confusion and contradiction; but with what justice, will appear immediately.

"Some," says he, "place it in the pope alone, as the only heir of St. Peter, and living judge of controversy; and therefore above all councils, and the whole body of the Church put together."

It is very true that some divines hold that the pope, considered precisely as Christ's vicar upon earth, and without being at the head of a general council, is infallible. But that any Catholic divine places the infallibility in the pope alone — that is, exclusively of a general council and the diffusive body of the Church — I utterly deny, and challenge the gentleman to produce any one divine of that opinion. And he must either mean this, or he forgets himself; because, unless this be his meaning, it can be no contradiction to the other three schemes of placing the infallibility; which is the principal point he has undertaken to prove.

As to what divines say concerning the pope's superiority over a general council, they mean no more than that he is the head of it; that, as supreme pastor of the Church, he has the power of calling and dissolving councils, and a spiritual authority over all the members whereof they are composed; just as the king of Great Britain has an authority over all his subjects, and the power of calling, proroguing, and dissolving parliaments; yet no man will say that the legislative power is lodged in the king alone.

But let us proceed to his second party. "Others," says he, "like not this. And because some popes have

proved heretical, and have been censured and deposed for it, and others have proved most wicked and flagitious men, who, besides the viciousness of their own lives, have filled the world with blood, &c., — for these and other reasons, they would not have the infallibility trusted with the pope, but lodge it in a general council, as superior to the pope, with power to reform and even to depose him."

There are two things true in this piece, which is a kind of miracle: — 1st, that some divines disown the pope's infallibility; and, 2dly, that some of those divines, amongst other reasons, give this, viz., because one or two popes, as they pretend, have proved heretical. But, as to the second reason, the wickedness of some popes, I suspect it to be the gentleman's own. For I scarce think that any Catholic divine would allege that for a proof. Nor do I see the least color of reason, why any man's wickedness should hinder him from being infallible in matters of faith, provided he be regularly qualified by a lawful mission, and legally called to the ministry of the gospel. Cannot a wicked man, legally called, be infallible, as well as the wicked Caiphas was a prophet because he was the high priest of that year? The one, as well as the other, is wholly the effect of a supernatural assistance, which God communicates to men, not in consideration of their personal merits, but of their character, or station; provided they be lawfully called to the ministry, and enter not, as the *reformers* did, into the sheepfold like thieves and robbers. So that the divines who deny the pope's infallibility have other reasons to insist upon for the ground of their opinion.

As to what he adds, that these divines "lodge the infallibility in a general council, as superior to the pope, with power to reform, and even to depose him," this, being spoken of councils in general, imports nothing less than that it is the opinion of some Catholic divines that it is a prerogative inherent in the very nature and constitution of a general council to be superior to, and

independent of, the pope; and that, by consequence, no council owes any subjection to him, nor derives any authority from him — which never was maintained by any Catholic divine.

I know very well that the Council of Pisa was called by the sole authority of the Church, and without the consent either of Benedict XIII. or Gregory XII., the two contending popes. But the election both of the one and the other being doubtful, the papal throne was in effect the same as vacant; and the Church in that case had full power to assemble herself in a general council, not only to proceed to the election of a pope whose title should be unquestionable, but likewise to put an end to that terrible schism which had divided the Church for many years, and which it was morally impossible to extinguish, but either by the deposition or voluntary abdication of the two competitors. And since no motives or persuasions could induce them to the latter, the Church was under an absolute necessity of proceeding to the former; as she did, by deposing both Benedict and Gregory, and choosing the cardinal of Milan, who took the name of Alexander V., but, dying the year after, was succeeded by John XXIII., also legally chosen, and acknowledged for true pope.

Now, who sees not, that here is an extraordinary case before us? — An unnatural schism in the Church; all Christendom divided into factions; two double heads, both stiff in maintaining their title; and a moral impossibility of remedying these evils, but by the expedient the Church made use of, which was extraordinary indeed, according to the nature of the evil it was to cure, but sufficiently justified by its necessity, and the invincible obstinacy of the two contending parties, which rendered the usual forms impracticable!

The affairs of the Church continued much in the same condition during the Council of Constance, which in effect was but a continuation of the Council of Pisa. For though it was called by the pope's authority, yet

being afterwards abandoned by him, and he declining to make a voluntary resignation, as he had promised to do, the council thought it necessary to proceed against him as an abettor of schism; and this occasioned that famous decree of the Council of Constance, wherein a general council is declared to be superior to the pope. Upon which, I presume, the gentleman grounds himself, when he tells us that there is a party of divines who place the infallibility in a general council, as superior to the pope, with power to reform and even to depose him. But if he means that those divines attribute a superiority to general councils, by virtue whereof they may, without any case of absolute necessity, assemble themselves independently of the pope, or continue to sit in spite of him, and exercise a kind of ordinary jurisdiction over him, — if this, I say, be his meaning, (as it must, to make any thing against us,) his assertion is wholly groundless, and such a party of divines is only to be found in the gentleman's own imagination.

The true meaning, therefore, of the decree of Constance (as the circumstances that occasioned it plainly show) is, that, in a case of absolute necessity, when the peace of the Church is concerned, and the pope himself becomes an abettor of schism, a general council may in that case go beyond its ordinary bounds prescribed by the canons, assume an extraordinary power, and compel the pope to such measures as are necessary for abolishing the schism, and restoring peace and union to the Church. Nor can it be inferred from thence, that a council is absolutely superior to the pope; because extraordinary proceedings can never be made a precedent for ordinary cases, nor can any general maxim be grounded upon them, — as it cannot be inferred that the parliament is superior to the king, because there may possibly happen a case (as the vacancy of the throne, supposing the whole royal line should happen to be extinct) in which the parliament would be obliged to assemble itself, to provide for the government and security of the kingdom.

The gentleman goes on thus: "A third party approves of neither of these ways. For, as they think the pope alone, without a council, not to be infallible, so neither the council without the pope, who is head of it, and without whom there can be no lawful council, as not a parliament without a king. These are for king and parliament, and place the supremacy and infallibility in neither pope nor council, but only when both together, and agreeing."

This passage is made up of a confused mixture of truth and falsehood, which can never fail to puzzle a cause, and perplex the reader: 1st, there never was a Catholic divine in the world who denied the supremacy to be in the pope alone; and, 2dly, those who place the infallibility of the Church in a general council and pope agreeing, are not a party, but the whole body of Catholic divines.

Hence it follows, that what he says to make out his fourth party is a very notorious misrepresentation of the Catholic doctrine. However, he ushers it in with a long catalogue of specious reasons, which I shall consider in the following chapter. But what is insupportable, he palms those reasons upon his pretended fourth party of Catholic divines; whereas I am sure no Catholic divine of note ever had any thing to do with them, otherwise than to be at the trouble to confute them, as I shall endeavor to do hereafter. "This," says he, "makes a fourth party in the Church of Rome — that is, of those who place the infallibility neither in pope nor council, jointly or severally, but in the Church militant, as they speak; that is, the Church diffusive, or all churches up and down the world."

I cannot here forbear asking the gentleman, why he did not name those Catholic divines who neither place the infallibility in pope nor council, jointly or severally. — that is, who deny the infallibility of general councils agreeing with the pope, and place it wholly and solely in the diffusive body of the Church. For does the gen-

tleman imagine he will be believed upon his bare word in a matter of that importance? If he does, he counts without his host.

However, I admonish the reader, that I only speak of general councils as defining matters of faith, and maintain that, in decisions of this nature, their infallibility was never questioned by any party of Catholic divines; but all unanimously agree, that a general council, acknowledged as such, is infallible in all its decrees relating to matters of faith, whatever the gentleman is pleased to say to the contrary.

The question, therefore, between us, is precisely this, viz.: "Whether there be a party of Catholic divines who deny general councils, agreeing with and approved by the pope, to be infallible in defining articles of faith." The gentleman maintains there is such a party. But since he did not think fit to mention any of the principal authors of that pretended party, I shall produce two substantial vouchers for the doctrine contrary to it, viz., Bellarmine and Suarez, who were both so well versed in Catholic authors, that, if there were such a party, they could not be ignorant of it.

Now, both these positively deny that there is such a party. Bellarmine's words are these: "And to begin with the first question; our modern heretics say, that there is no council but what may err. So Luther, &c. But all Catholic divines constantly teach, that general councils, confirmed by the pope, cannot err, either in explaining matters of faith, or precepts of morality, wherein the whole Church is concerned." L. 2, de Conc. et Eccl. c. 2. This is plain; and Suarez writes thus: "But, secondly, we must add, that a general council, at which the pope is present, either in person or by his legates, after it is confirmed by the pope himself, is an infallible rule of faith. This is an article of faith wherein all Catholics agree." P. 5, de Fide, Sect. 7, N. 9.

These two learned men are, I think, unexceptionable

witnesses of the fact in question. And it follows from it, that our belief of the infallibility of general councils, agreeing with the pope, in defining articles of faith, is not a party opinion, as the gentleman represents it. However, to make this false coin go off, what he has mixed with it is unquestionably true, viz., "that those whom he calls his fourth party place the infallibility in the diffusive body of the Church." This, therefore, I freely own to be Catholic doctrine, and only except against his representing it as a party opinion; as if those who place the infallibility in the diffusive body of the Church were opposite to those who place it in a general council. For where is the incoherency in placing it both in the one and the other? On the contrary, both these tenets flow from the same principle, and have but one and the same foundation, viz., the words of Christ promising infallibility to his Church, which expresses her diffusive body; and, by consequence, to her bishops and governors lawfully assembled, who are the representatives of that body.

Neither is this so wide a mark as the gentleman pretends, (p. 64.) He says, "We must travel and learn." But I can point it out clearly to him, and save him the trouble of travelling, though not of learning, if he desires to be informed. This body, therefore, (which we call the diffusive body of the Church, to distinguish it from the Church assembled in council,) is composed of "all the bishops and pastors throughout the whole world, professing the same doctrine, and united in faith and communion with their supreme pastor, the bishop of Rome." Now, when these agree, either in the condemnation of any heresy, or profession of any article of faith, preaching and teaching the same doctrine, (of which we may be easily informed without travelling,) this unanimous consent has the same force and authority as the decree of a general council.

I shall give a clear instance, to explain myself. The Pelagian heresy never was condemned but by some

national or provincial councils; but this condemnation having been confirmed by many popes, and received by all the orthodox bishops and pastors throughout the whole world, we may say it is condemned by the diffusive body of the Church; which no man of sense can deny to be equivalent to a condemnation pronounced by the Church, assembled in a general council. And we look upon it to be as impossible, and as inconsistent with the promises of Christ, that God should permit the whole diffusive Church to err, as that he should withdraw his assistance from her when her bishops and pastors are assembled together in his name. For what way soever the Church fails, whether in her diffusive body, or assembled together in a general council, the gates of hell prevail equally against her, and the promises of Christ are equally defeated.

What, therefore, we mean by placing the infallibility in the diffusive body of the Church, is not to make either women or laics, — though within the pale, — judges in matters of faith, but only those whom Christ himself has deputed and qualified for that important trust; according to the testimony of St. Paul, saying, "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. . . . . That we henceforth be no more like children tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine." Eph. iv. 11, 12, 14. It is in these we place the infallibility when they agree in any point of doctrine; which is a mark of their being assisted and directed by the Spirit of truth. So that whether they meet in a general council, or live dispersed in their respective dioceses, their judgment or decisions in matters of faith are of equal authority, as being equally under the sacred influences and direction of the divine Spirit promised to the Church by him whose word, I presume, we may depend upon with an undoubted assurance.

Now, then, to conclude this chapter, it follows from what has been said, that, instead of difference and confusion, wherewith the gentleman has charged the Catholic divines, there is a perfect harmony and agreement amongst them in every essential point relating to the matter in question. 1st, they all hold that the infallibility is lodged in the diffusive body of the Church; and, 2dly, that it is likewise lodged in general councils, acknowledged for such, as being the true representatives of that body.

Hence it follows, again, that the only disputed point among Catholic divines is concerning the pope's infallibility; wherein the faith of the Church is not the least concerned. It is like a thousand other theological questions, in which every one is free to take what side he pleases; and both opinions are permitted, but neither espoused by the Church as an article of her faith.

And had not the gentleman then a great deal of reason to crow over his poor innocent lord, and ask him, with an insulting air, "which of the four he would take, — that he had three to one against him, let him take which he would." Suppose his lordship had placed the infallibility in the pope, would that have hindered him from placing it also in the diffusive body of the Church? Or cannot he who owns the diffusive body of the Church, and its representative, a general council, to be infallible, extend the same prerogative to the pope, without contradicting himself? I cannot offer that injury to the gentleman's good sense, as to think he will deny it; and I hope I have by this time convinced any impartial reader that we are not so very much at a loss to find our infallible guide as the gentleman pretends. Our guide is easy to be found by all those who will but seek him sincerely. Let but passion, interest, and prepossession, be laid aside, and nothing will be so easy as to find him. But if a man be resolved to keep his eyes shut, the clearest light will be darkness to him.

However, I am resolved, for the gentleman's sake, to

point out our infallible guide so clearly to him, that, if he has any inclination to follow him, (and I heartily pray God to inspire him with thoughts so conducing to his eternal welfare,) he cannot possibly miss of him. First, then, the diffusive body of the Roman Catholic Church is this infallible guide. Let not the gentleman be afraid of the trouble or expense of travelling. He may inform himself of every article of faith, taught by his guide, by an expedient much easier and cheaper. Let him but consult by letter any Catholic bishop, or man of learning, whether in Flanders, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Poland, or any other part of the world, to know of him what is precisely of faith and what not, — so as to make it an article of communion in any point he doubts of, — and he may have a faithful information of the doctrine taught by the diffusive body of the Church, without crossing the seas, or even going out of his closet for it. Or, if he will not trust to this, let him but furnish himself with catechisms, printed in the respective languages of those countries, and he will find them all agree in their summary of the whole Christian doctrine professed and taught by the said diffusive body. This guide, then, may be easily found.

But since the gentleman is a man of learning, and may, perhaps, think it beneath him to read catechisms composed only to instruct the ignorant, he may, if he pleases, go to the very source, and there inform himself of every article of the Roman Catholic faith, taught by the representatives of this diffusive body, — I mean the general councils, — and here, again, he will meet our infallible guide, whom he thinks we have so much difficulty to find. There are general councils enough uncontested, and acknowledged for such by the whole diffusive body of the Roman Catholic Church. The infallible authority of these in matters of faith is disputed by no Catholic divine. All articles of communion, which are abridged in our catechisms, with the condemnation of the heresies opposite to them, are to be found in the

decrees of these councils. What can any reasonable man desire more? Here is neither difference nor confusion. All Catholic divines acknowledge these for their infallible guide; and he may be found, with as much ease as the situation of a town in a map, by any man that will but use his eyes and understanding.

If the sense of some decisions of these councils be disputed by Catholic divines, as long as both opinions are tolerated by the Church, it is evident they contain no articles of communion, nor rules of faith; so that they are no hinderance to any man's finding his guide in the other decrees that are clear and uncontested. We need but lay aside what is doubtful, and hold fast what is certain; and of this we have abundantly enough to keep any man from going astray, and direct him to the way of truth and salvation. Whence I conclude, that there was no occasion either for his smart question, — "And what difference is there between having no guide and one you cannot find?" nor for his lord's wise answer, — "If I cannot find him, I have him not; and that is all as one as to have none."

CHAPTER IX.

THE GENTLEMAN'S OBJECTIONS AGAINST GENERAL COUNCILS ANSWERED.

The gentleman, as I have already remarked, introduces his fourth scheme with a long catalogue of reasons against the infallibility of general councils, which I have promised to answer. But I find myself obliged to be at the trouble of digesting them into some order, because the gentleman has been pleased to huddle them together in a very confused manner.

First, then, he objects, "that in some councils, called general, the pope and council have disagreed; popes have been against popes, and councils against councils." All this is very true with reference to the Councils of Pisa and Constance, both which were opposed by Benedict and Gregory, two doubtful popes before, and deposed in the Council of Pisa; and these were also against one another, and held their private conventicles, which they called councils, not only in opposition to each other, but likewise to the two fore-mentioned general councils. But did they disagree, either among themselves or with the Councils of Pisa and Constance, about any matter of faith? They certainly did not; for the whole difference was about a matter of fact, viz., the validity of their election. And what is that to the purpose?

Another of his objections is, "that, in some councils called general, the pope, or his legates, withdrew from the council." And for this he quotes the Councils of

Constance and Basil, and concludes from it, "that then they were no longer lawful councils." As to the pope's withdrawing from the Council of Constance, the fact is unquestionable. For John XXIII. withdrew privately from Constance, intending thereby to frustrate the principal design of that council, which was, to extinguish the schism by obliging him to resign the pontificate, as he had promised to do, at his election, in case it should be demanded of him for the good of the Church. His election, therefore, was only conditional; and, his escape being a breach of the condition upon which he had been chosen, he forfeited his title by it; but the council lost nothing of its authority, any more than if the pope had died. In effect, being soon after taken, and imprisoned by the emperor Sigismond, he was obliged to make a solemn resignation of the pontificate in presence of the council.

But the case of the Council of Basil is very different from the other; for there the pope did not abandon the council, but by his authority removed it to another place, and was followed by the greatest part of the bishops and clergy. But a few factious bishops, and some of the inferior clergy, separated themselves from the pope and council, continued to meet at Basil, and styled themselves the general council of that place, but were never regarded otherwise by the Church than as a schismatical conventicle.

His third objection is, "that the requisites necessary to constitute a lawful council, and consequently infallible, are impossible to be known with any certainty." But he might as well maintain, that it is impossible to know the requisites necessary to constitute a lawful parliament; which doctrine would not be well relished in Great Britain. For is there any greater mystery in the Church, as well studied and known by canonists as the laws of the civil government by lawyers? But suppose that, on some extraordinary occasion, the usual forms prescribed by the canons should not be exactly

observed in the summoning or convening of a general council, — as certainly they were not in the Councils of Pisa and Constance, — would this shorten the hand of the Almighty, or disable it from preserving the Church from falling into error? Surely, the gentleman is not so weak as to entertain such a groundless fancy.

His fourth objection is ushered in with a flourish upon the several passions of human nature, and by which men are apt to be biased in their judgment; and he concludes thus from it: "So that we cannot be certain of the infallibility of any council, unless we are infallibly sure that none of these human passions had a mixture in it." p. 94.

According to this logic, we cannot be certain of the infallibility of the Gospels; because the persons that wrote them were men, and by consequence subject to human passions. But the gentleman does not reflect, that the infallibility of councils depends not either on the wit, or learning, or holiness, or any natural qualifications of the members whereof they are composed, but is wholly owing to the sacred influences and direction of the Holy Ghost, promised by Christ to his Church.

We grant, then, that all the members of general councils are subject to human passions; nay, men are generally blinded with them in some measure. But cannot a blind man find his way, when he has a sure guide to conduct him? The wicked Caiphas was blinded with malice — the very worst of passions; yet this hindered not the Spirit of God from coming upon him; and, when inspired, he was as true a prophet as Samuel or David. And is not the Spirit of truth, whom Christ has promised to his Church, and the "spirit of prophecy, one and the self-same spirit?" 1 Cor. xii. 11. "Does not the Spirit breathe where he pleases?" and cannot he direct the instruments himself has chosen? Christ has chosen bishops and pastors, lawfully sent, to be the rulers of his Church; and when he chose them, he knew them to be fallible men,

and subject to passions; and for that very reason he promised them an infallible guide, who should govern and direct them, overrule all the infirmities of human nature, or even make them become subservient to his own designs. Our dependence, therefore, is not on the personal merits of any assembly whatsoever; but we rely entirely upon God's promises, which can no more be defeated, or obstructed by human passions, than the eternal designs of his infinite wisdom by the constant vices and follies of mankind.

CHAPTER X.

OTHER OBJECTIONS AGAINST GENERAL COUNCILS ANSWERED.

The gentleman tells us, (p. 23,) "that we are not agreed among ourselves about general councils." For which he quotes Bellarmine's list: "1, of general councils which are to be rejected; 2, of general councils partly confirmed and partly reprobated; and, 3, of a general council neither manifestly approved nor manifestly rejected." "This," says he, "is going through all the degrees of uncertainty." He likewise tells us, (p. 24,) that "Bellarmine quotes the last Council of Lateran condemning the Council of Basil, which he says was at first a true general council, and infallible, but afterwards turned to a schismatic conventicle, and was of no authority at all." The gentleman adds, "that the Church of France receives the Councils of Constance and Basil wholly and throughout, but the Church of Rome rejects both in part."

But this, with the gentleman's good leave, is a mistake. For Charles VII., who was the king of France, as well as the emperor, and other princes, received not the decree of the Council of Basil against Pope Eugenius, but continued to acknowledge him for pope. Du Pin. Cent. 15, p. 48. And the whole Church has received both the Councils of Basil and Constance as to all their decrees relating to faith. And, therefore, what Bellarmine says concerning that council is very true; for it was a regular council

assembled by, and united to, its head, till the 25th session. But after that, upon the occasion I mentioned before, it was no more a true council than a few caballing members at Westminster would be a true parliament, if the king, by his authority, should remove it to Oxford.

But let us now consider what advantage the gentleman pretends to make of Bellarmine's list of councils, which he says are either doubtful, or wholly rejected, or in part. I presume he means to infer from it that, therefore, no infallibility can be placed in general councils. I easily grant it cannot in such spurious general councils as are rejected by the Church; which Bellarmine calls general, not because they were truly so, but I suppose because they styled themselves so: as the Council of Sardica, consisting of 76 Arian bishops, who condemned St. Athanasius; the rump Council of Basil; and such others. These Bellarmine calls general councils in a large sense, as we call Oliver's parliament a parliament. Nay, one of Bellarmine's general councils, rejected, is a synod held at Wittemberg, wholly made up of Protestant divines, in which Luther presided.

These, then, are not the general councils in which we lodge the infallibility promised by Christ to his Church. Neither do we take our rules of faith from canons, or councils, of a disputed and uncertain authority. For have we not general councils enough unanimously received, and approved by the whole body of Roman Catholics, and in which all doctrinal points of controversy between us and heretics are fully and clearly determined? These, then, are the councils, the decisions whereof we regard as infallible rules of faith: because they are the true representatives of that Church to which Christ has promised his perpetual assistance, and which, in all ages, is "the pillar and ground of truth," no less than she was in the first age of Christianity. So that the spuriousness or uncertainty of some councils styled general, and the illegality of some parts of

others, cannot be turned into an argument of any weight against the certainty and infallibility of other councils, universally received and approved by us, any more than the authority of legal parliaments can be questioned, because there have been some very illegal ones — some partly legal and partly illegal — and others of a doubtful authority.

But, to instance in a case exactly parallel, there were spurious gospels handed about even in the time of the apostles. And Dr. Walton, an eminent Protestant writer, assures us positively, (and the fact is unquestionable,) that "the book of Revelations, and some other parts of the New Testament, were doubted of for some ages." In Proleg. c. 4, § 6, p. 31. Thus, likewise, the books of Ezra are partly canonical and partly apocryphal, according to the judgment of the gentleman's church as well as ours; and also the history of Manasses, whose prayer to God, in his captivity, is reckoned amongst the apocryphals. Nay, she has likewise split the prophecy of Daniel, the two last chapters whereof are wholly omitted in her Bible. Yet I hope no Christian will make these parallel facts an objection against the certainty and infallibility of Scriptures. And if these be no objections against Scriptures, as most certainly they are not, neither are those collected from Bellarmine of any moment against general councils. For, whatever the gentleman answers to these will be a full answer to his own objection; which, by proving too much, proves nothing at all.

But what must we then rely securely upon, both as to Scriptures and councils? If St. Paul has not deceived us, in calling the Catholic Church "the pillar and ground of truth," (1 Tim. iii. 13,) the weight and authority of her judgment is our only security, and alone sufficient to remove all doubts. So that, whatever difficulties are yet remaining, either concerning Scriptures or councils, the Catholic Church alone has full power given her by Christ to determine them juridi-

cally. And "he that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican." Matt. xviii. 17.

The gentleman goes on thus, (p. 24:) "They who place the infallibility in councils will need another infallible judge, to determine these disputes concerning the councils — which are truly general, and which not; and which are partly so, and which throughout; which is corrupted in any part, and, when one council condemns another, which we shall believe. And if we must not believe every council, that calls itself œcumenical, we can believe no other council against it, for the same reason. The second Council of Ephesus is generally condemned in your church, yet it called itself œcumenical, and was, as much as any of the others. And what a thing is it to say, that a council is partly right and partly wrong! And who is the judge of that? Is there any certainty in this? — far less infallibility!" He adds, "And we must have an infallible method, too, to preserve the acts of the councils, that they be not adulterated, as Bellarmine says they have been." My answer to this piece shall be as brief as possible.

"They," says the gentleman, "who place the infallibility in councils will need another infallible judge to determine," &c. But why so? Is not every supreme tribunal, from which there is no appeal, an unexceptionable judge even in all cases relating to itself — as its own privileges, or authority; the legality of its proceedings; and when its meeting or sitting is according to law, and when not, and the like? And why then will the gentleman require another judge, besides the Church herself, to determine all controversies relating to councils, which are but the representatives of the Church?

The parliament of Great Britain is undoubtedly itself the only competent judge to determine all parliamentary disputes — as what members are legally chosen; what

number is requisite to make it a sufficient representative of the whole nation; whether Oliver's parliament was a lawful assembly or only a seditious club; whether the long parliament, called by Charles I., was lawful throughout, or only in part; and how long it continued, and when it ceased, to be a lawful parliament. In a word, if any one should question the legality of parliamentary proceedings, I ask whether the nation will allow of any judge, but the parliament itself, to determine the matter.

Now, it is just so with the Church; (unless the gentleman will not allow Christ's kingdom on earth to have an authority equal to that of the state;) it is so, I say, with the Church. She is the only judge to determine "what councils are truly general, and what not; and which are partly so, and which throughout; whether any part of them be corrupted; and, finally, when one council condemns another, which of the two is to be believed." For all these questions are as easily resolved by the Church as parliamentary disputes are determined by the parliament; because both the one and the other have their rules to judge by; only with this difference, that Christ has promised infallibility to his Church, but not to the parliament of Great Britain.

He goes on thus: "And if we must not believe every council that calls itself œcumenical, we can believe no other council against it, for the same reason." No! This is very strange indeed. For, according to this logic, every schismatical assembly that but dubs itself a council is of the same authority as the great Council of Nice. But the gentleman affects sometimes to be extremely short-sighted, and asserts things boldly without ever considering the consequences that follow. Is this sound reasoning?—"If we must not believe every parliament that calls itself the representative of the whole nation, (as the rump parliament did,) we cannot believe any other parliament against it, for the same reason!" If this be so, what will become of the constitu-

tion?—of liberty and property, nay, monarchy itself? A club of rebels and enemies to the crown shall style themselves a parliament, as they did in Oliver's days, subvert the constitution, and tyrannize over the people; and, if a parliament come afterwards to be legally assembled, as it was at the happy restoration, it shall have no more authority, according to the gentleman's way of arguing, than the most seditious conventicle that but assumes the name of parliament to itself.

But the jest is carried on too far in the following words: "The second Council of Ephesus is generally condemned in your church. Yet it called itself œcumenical, and was, as much as any of the other." What will not prejudice, or blind zeal for a party, prompt a man to write? I scarce believe there is a learned Christian in the world, of any sect whatsoever but that of Eutyches, who will subscribe to what the gentleman here tells us. "The second Council of Ephesus," says he, "is generally [he should have said universally] condemned by your church." And I hope, by the grace of God, it is no less universally condemned by all Protestant churches; for that council never had any other name than that of *Latrocinium Ephesinum*—that is, the "Ephesian band of rioters and assassins." Eutyches himself, and his friend Barsumas, came to it with three hundred schismatical monks, all armed, and followed by a troop of armed soldiers. Flavianus, the only patriarch of Constantinople, was so barbarously used in it that three days after he died of his wounds; the pope's legates escaped narrowly with their lives; and the clerks of the council had their fingers broken. And though these are but some part of the violent outrages committed in it, yet this is that noble council which the gentleman is pleased to take into his protection, and adopt into the number of general councils, as if it had been as regular an assembly as the Council of Nice.

He concludes with this vehement interrogation: "And what a thing is it to say, that a council is partly

right and partly wrong; and who is the judge of that? Is there any certainty in this, far less infallibility?" I have already told him who is the judge; and as to his vehement interrogation, I am surprised he should make so great a wonder of a thing which is none at all. Unless he means that a council, legally assembled, and truly general, should, in deciding matters of faith, be partly right and partly wrong; which, indeed, is impossible, and was never thought of, much less maintained, by any Catholic divine. But that an assembly, which was legal at first, should, by a separation from its head and the soundest part of its members, turn afterwards into a schismatic conventicle, and yet continue to style itself a general council, I think is no such strange thing as the gentleman makes it. Nay, it was the very case of the Council of Basil; which, therefore, may properly be called a council that was partly right and partly wrong; like the long parliament, which was right at first, but very wrong in the end.

As to what he adds, "that there must be an infallible method to preserve the acts of the councils from being corrupted, as Bellarmine says they have been," I presume the same sort of method and care which is taken to preserve the Scriptures (which I hope the gentleman will allow to be infallible in their doctrine) will likewise suffice to preserve the acts of the councils. Neither does Bellarmine teach (as the gentleman pretends) that the acts of the councils were ever corrupted in any thing relating to faith. And here I shall take the freedom to transcribe the gentleman's own answer, in defence of the Scriptures, to an objection against them proposed by his lordship in the deist's name; which is much the same as what we have now before us against the councils. "But," says the lord, (p. 54,) "there are various lections and translations of the Scriptures into many languages, which agree not exactly and in every point with one another." To which the gentle-

man answers: "But there is no difference among them in any thing that is material, or what concerns faith. So that this, instead of an objection, (which the deists make use of to invalidate the truth of Scriptures and the certainty of our faith,) proves a stronger confirmation of both, in that, among so many various readings and translations, no material difference is found. . . . None, I suppose, will pretend that every writer, or printer, is infallible, not to mistake a letter or a word, or misplace them. But that nothing of this sort has happened to the detriment of the faith, or making disputes in any thing that is material, must be attributed to a very particular Providence." I hope the gentleman will accept of this answer to his own objection from the pretended corruptions of councils, which are of no other nature than such as the Scriptures themselves may be liable to.

He objects again, (p. 66,) that the great Lateran Council (which all Catholics acknowledge to be a true general council) has erred in its third canon, which decrees the deposing power. But the gentleman himself has furnished me with an answer to it; for he owns that the sense of that canon is disputed by Catholic divines. If so, as it certainly is, it can be no rule of faith, and the diversity of opinions about it, as in other theological questions, causes no breach of communion with the see of Rome. So that it requires another general council, or an authority equivalent to it, to determine the true meaning of it, before it can pass into an article of communion.

As to what he affirms, (p. 23,) and repeats several times with a positiveness which, I think, must surprise every reader, viz., "that there never was such a thing as a general council, and that it is next to impossible there ever should be one," I will not so much as give myself the trouble to confute it, but shall only refer him to the 21st Protestant article of religion, which begins thus:

"General councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of princes." Nay, the Church of England allows of the first four general councils, and calls them by that name. This certainly implies, at least, that a general council is morally possible.

CONCLUSION.

I WILL now take my leave of that gentleman, who, I hope, will do me the justice to own that I have represented all his arguments, relating to my subject, with the greatest fairness and candor. And, though I cannot presume my answers will appear fully satisfactory to him, I flatter myself they will appear so to every impartial reader.

I shall here add some reflections relating to the promises of Christ, (on which the doctrine of infallibility is grounded,) on the one hand, and the gentleman's objections against it, on the other. Suppose Christ had made a promise in these express terms, — "I will preserve my Church from erring to the end of the world," — I ask whether all the gentleman's objections against her infallibility would not have had the same weight, in this supposition, as they have now. It is plain they would; for his scriptural texts against it would be the same. The condition of obedience, which he tacks to all God's promises, would be the same. Men would be fallible in their nature, just as they are now. All his fine reasons for private judgment would be the same they are now. The Jewish church would have failed in the same manner it has now, and his objection, from the failure of the whole Church at our Savior's death, would be the very same. And so of all the rest.

Now, then, I ask again, whether these objections would be of any force, in case Christ had made this ex-

press promise, "I will preserve my Church from erring to the end of the world." I scarce believe the gentleman himself will say there could have been any solid objection against so plain a text. And yet all his objections would have the very same force and weight, in case there was such a text, as they have now: it is therefore plain they are of no weight at all; and the reason is, because they attack the plain Word of God as much now as they would in the fore-mentioned supposition. For, in effect, these sacred words of Christ, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against my Church," (Matt. xvi. 18,) as, likewise, "And lo! I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world," (Matt. xxviii. 20,) contain as full a promise of the Church's infallibility as if he had said in express terms, "I will preserve my church from erring to the end of the world." In like manner, St. Paul's saying that the Church is "the pillar and ground of truth," (1 Tim. iii. 15,) is but saying, in other terms, that she is infallible. And if this be not a conclusion fairly deduced from our Savior's and St. Paul's words, I defy the gentleman to prove any mystery of Christianity from the written Word of God.

Here, again, I desire the reader to observe the difference there is between the text I have produced, to prove the Church's infallibility, and those the gentleman has mustered up against it. It is certain, whatever doctrine is supported by the Word of God, rightly understood, must have truth on its side. But the whole difficulty is concerning the true understanding and interpretation of his sacred Word. And since this is the point the gentleman and I differ about, we must have recourse to some decisive authority to come to the true meaning of such texts as have a reference to the subject under debate.

Now, here is the difference between his texts and mine, which appears to me very material. I have already quoted several fathers as witnesses of the ancient faith, maintaining the Church's infallibility from those

very texts — I mean the promises of Christ, which we regard as the sole foundation of it. But the gentleman has not one single orthodox father to join with him in his interpretation of the texts he has quoted against it. On the contrary, the Donatists (who are heretics in the judgment of the Church of England as well as ours, and, among other new doctrines, maintained the Church's fallibility) had recourse to those very texts, to support their error. But they were opposed by the whole Catholic Church; and both St. Austin and St. Jerome, who were the chief champions of the Church against them, made it their business to render them sensible that they had used violence to the Word of God, and strained it from its true meaning. So that I may confidently say, the Word of God, interpreted by the ancient Church, is for me; and the Word of God, as abused and misinterpreted by ancient heretics, is all the gentleman has for himself — which alone might suffice to determine who has the truth of the question on his side.

But the gentleman himself has granted me enough to make out the rest. For he never denies, nor can he have the confidence to deny absolutely, but that the Church has promises of infallibility made her by Christ; because the texts are so plain and strong, that it is impossible to fasten any other meaning upon them. But what *salvo* has he, then, to bring himself off from being a heretic? or how can he justify the *reformation?* For, can a Church that is infallible be reformed in her faith? He does not pretend to say an infallible Church can be reformed, for that would be too gross. But he says that, notwithstanding the promises made by Christ, there is no church upon earth but what is fallible. But can the promises of God then fail? Can God be false to his word? "No," says he, "that is impossible; but we may mistake his promises, and may not perform the condition." Case stated, p. 28.

Here, then, is his main bulwark to cover him against

the plain promises of Christ, viz., "that all God's promises are conditional, as having all the condition of obedience implied." If this be false, he is left without defence; and I think I have already demonstrated the falsehood of it. Part II. chap. III. I shall now only remind the reader of two instances of God's promises, which cannot have the condition of obedience, nor any other condition tacked to them. First, God's promise to Noah, that the world shall not be destroyed by a second deluge; and, secondly, the promise of the Messias, which Christ vouchsafed to fulfil even when the world was perhaps in the most wicked and profligate condition it ever was since the creation. Obedience, therefore, was not implied as a condition for the performance of it. Nay, if the gentleman will persist to maintain that this promise had the condition of obedience implied in it, I advise him to burn his "Christianity demonstrated."

It is, therefore, manifest that, though there be some instances of conditional promises in holy writ, all are not so, nor can it be maintained that a promise is essentially conditional; and so the gentleman must be content to abandon the retrenchment wherein he thought himself secure against the plain words of Christ. But what, then, will he do to defeat the promises of infallibility, which are plain against him? For, if they be absolute and unconditional, they cannot fail; and if they cannot, the Church's infallibility is perpetual, indefeasible, inalienable; and the *reformation* is a defenceless cause.

Here, then, his last and only shift can be, to suppose confidently that the promises of Christ to his Church are, at least, of the number of such as are conditional. But how can he pretend to make good his supposition? Is there any condition, either mentioned, or even so much as hinted at, in the promises I have quoted? Did the primitive Church ever understand them as the gentleman does? Has he the authority of one orthodox

father, either Greek or Latin, to support him? Nothing of all this. Neither Scriptures nor fathers tell us that the promises of Christ to his Church are conditional; yet the gentleman will needs have it so; and, though he makes it a matter of religion and conscience not to depend upon the letter of promises, even as interpreted by the Catholic Church for many hundred years together, yet he has the boldness to hazard his soul's eternal salvation upon a mere precarious guess of his own, and the most arbitrary exposition of those promises; nay, and to encourage others to venture with him upon the same unsafe bottom. Let any unbiased man judge whether his proceeding be rational, and whether it be not much safer to depend upon the plain words of Christ, as they were depended upon by the whole Church for many ages, than upon a strained and arbitrary exposition of them.

I shall end with some questions, which regard the gentleman particularly as he is a member of the Episcopal Church of England, for I own they have not all the same force in relation to other reformed churches.

First, then, I ask, whether the Church of Christ on earth has always been one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. If he says not, it follows, first, that the creed was false whilst there was no such Church, which, I think, is little better than blasphemy; it follows, secondly, that the 8th Protestant article of religion is false, which says, "that the three creeds may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture."

But, if he says that there always was such a Church on earth since the establishment of Christianity, I ask him, secondly, whether that Church was always visible before the *reformation*, or not? If he says she was for a long time invisible before the *reformation*, then it follows that the Church of England either has not her ordination and mission derived from the holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ, or she received them from the hands of invisible bishops and pastors, which is absurd.

But if he says she was always visible in her bishops and pastors, then I come to my third question, where the matter pinches. I ask him, therefore, in what external visible communion this one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ (the belief whereof we profess in the Nicene creed) subsisted before the beginning of the *reformation*. For either the Church in communion with the see of Rome was this one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, or she was in some other external visible communion of bishops and pastors. If the gentleman chooses the latter, he is first bound to inform me in what part of the world this Church had her being. But he must take care not to tell me that she was in any part of Christendom; for if he does, he gives the lie to the 35th article of religion, which tells us that "the Book of Homilies contains a godly and wholesome doctrine;" and the homily against the peril of idolatry, (3d part,) tells us expressly that "whole Christendom" was drowned in abominable idolatry (by which Popery is meant, according to Protestant language) for the space of eight hundred years and more before the *reformation*. It is therefore certain that there was no room in Christendom for this holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ, if she was in any other external visible communion than that of the Church of Rome, which, according to the Book of Homilies, was in possession of "whole Christendom" for many ages. Besides all this, the gentleman must give me a list of the names of particular countries, kings, and bishops, who were in the communion of the Church. And, lastly, he must let me know the name and diocese of the bishop of this communion by whom the first English Protestant bishop was ordained, and from whom the Church of England derives her mission.

But this being a task impossible for the gentleman to perform, and the thing itself being a contradiction to the whole system of his own church, which labors all she can to derive both her ordination and mission from

her old mother Church, the Church of Rome, the gentleman has no choice left but to own fairly, either that the Nicene creed was false for many hundred years before the *reformation*, or that the Church in communion with the see of Rome was alone this one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church professed in that creed: and if she was that Church when Protestants reformed her, she is so still; because she has not changed her faith since that time.

Whence I infer, first, that the gentleman's whole book is a satire and lampoon upon the holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ; which I think he has no reason to be proud of.

I infer, secondly, that whoever writes against the Church of Rome, if he will state the case fairly, is bound to advertise his reader that he writes against the holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ, and intends to confute the Nicene creed, in spite of the 8th Protestant article of religion, which declares positively, "that the Nicene creed may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture."

I infer, thirdly, that the Church of England, at the time of the pretended reformation, fell from the holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ, which, I think, suffices alone to condemn her. And, unless the gentleman can show the illegality of these consequences, I do not see what he can do else but give up the cause.

I presume he will not have recourse to the old distinction of fundamentals and non-fundamentals to bring himself off, and say that, since the Church of Rome never erred in fundamentals, she always was a true Church; and so the Church of England only separated herself from her errors, but not from her faith in fundamentals. I presume, I say, the gentleman will not have recourse to this evasion, for reasons I shall give immediately. But suppose he should fly for refuge to that distinction, it will not screen him against the force of my argument; because I have already proved (part I.

chap. II.,) that a church which becomes guilty of any wilful error against the revealed Word of God, whether that error be fundamental or not, cannot be that one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ, described in the Nicene creed. Now, the Church of Christ, to which all the promises are made, has, by virtue of those promises, such lights in regard to all revealed truths, that if, upon a serious examination of any disputed article, she should define any thing contrary to the revealed Word of God, her error would be wilful; and, by consequence, she would lose all divine faith, as I have proved in the fore-mentioned chapter; and a church without divine faith cannot be that one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church described in the Nicene creed. So that the gentleman will still be forced to own, either that that creed was false for many ages, or to mark out some external visible communion, distinct from that of the Church of Rome, wherein the Church of the Nicene creed had a being, and subsisted, before the *reformation*.

However, I think myself very sure he will never give into that distinction; and I advise him, as a friend, not to do it, by reason of some contradictions he will unavoidably stumble upon, if he ventures to meddle with it. For if he allows the Church of Christ to be infallible in fundamentals, it will follow that the promises of infallibility, which Christ made to his Church, are positive and unconditional, at least as to all fundamentals. And what will then become of his unlimited principle, which is too sweet a bit to be easily parted with, viz., "that the condition of obedience is implied in all God's promises"? Again, what will become of his saying "that there is no infallibility among men"? This, therefore, must likewise be dropped. Nay, some men will be apt to infer, that God can as easily preserve his Church from non-fundamental as from fundamental errors; and even engage himself, by a positive and unconditional promise, that he will preserve her in that manner to the end of the world.

But there is something worse than all this yet to come. For, if the gentleman acknowledges the Church of Rome to be orthodox in all fundamentals, he is then bound in conscience to declare that the charge of idolatry against that Church is the most unchristian piece of nonsense and calumny that ever was fixed upon any society of men. He must condemn the Book of Homilies, which fastens this calumny upon the Church of Rome, and with it the 35th article of religion, which recommends this book as containing "godly and wholesome doctrine." He must anathematize his master, Stillingfleet, of whom he has borrowed that noble parallel between the heathen and Popish idolatry, in the illustrating and adorning whereof he has taken a world of pains in his "Case stated." Lastly, he must be so just and humble as to take care to have near thirty pages struck out in the next edition of that book; or, at least, to advertise his reader, in the preface, that, in his warm charge of idolatry upon the Papists, he really did not reflect upon the distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals; since it is the rankest contradiction in nature to accuse a church of idolatry, and at the same time own her to be orthodox in all fundamentals.

I know not whether the gentleman will ever think himself bound in conscience to make this retractation. But this I am sure of, that, in the excessive heat of his charge of idolatry upon the Church of Rome, he has given a mortal wound to his own church, which he has quite unchurched by it. And so has Stillingfleet; and so has the Book of Homilies; and so do all such hot-headed and inconsiderate preachers and writers, as pretend to maintain this gross calumny against us.

The reason hereof is grounded upon this received maxim, viz., "that no man can give to another what he has not himself." Now, if the Church of Rome was, at the time of the *reformation*, an idolatrous church, it follows that she was under St. Paul's excommunication, (Gal. i. 8,) and was, by consequence, deprived of the

lawful authority to use and exercise the power of orders; and so had no power to govern, or preach the Word, or administer the sacraments. Whence it follows that, as the Church of Rome had not this power herself, she could not give it to the Church of England; which, therefore, is a church without mission or ecclesiastical authority, because she herself pretends to no claim to it, but as derived from the Church of Rome. And thus the gentleman, by laboring to fix idolatry upon the Church, has ruined his own, and stripped her of all ecclesiastical authority, which cannot be derived from an anti-Christian, idolatrous, and apostate church. I leave him to consider how he will extricate himself out of this labyrinth of difficulties, in which he has involved himself and those who espouse the defence of his "Case stated."

But I have now done with him, and will only add, that what I have said in defence of the Roman Catholic Church, if it has no other effect, will, I hope, suffice at least to convince Protestants that it is not obstinacy, but conscience, that hinders us from conforming to the church established by law. It is certainly our interest to do it. For it is purely upon the account of religion that we are under the lash of the severest penal laws; deprived of all public employments, and even of our birthright in many things; that we are libelled almost in every miserable pamphlet that appears abroad, and declaimed against from every pulpit in the nation; that, finally, we are the objects of hatred and contempt, and the victims of every discontented party. And what, then, should hinder us, unless we are supposed to be all mad, from putting ourselves upon the same footing with others, (as we may do, whenever we please,) if a full conviction of judgment, (notwithstanding the most powerful motives to bias us to the contrary,) and the ties of conscience and religion, were not an invincible restraint upon us?

If we broached new doctrines, which always disturb the peace of a nation, we should justly deserve to be re-

garded and treated as public enemies. But since we only maintain the ancient religion of Great Britain, established and professed without interruption for the space of nine hundred years before the *reformation*, surely no moderate Protestant can judge otherwise than that it is a great hardship to be under all the disadvantages I have mentioned, purely for continuing constant to a cause which we should certainly abandon, if we thought our eternal as well as temporal interest would be secured by it. However, since it is by God's holy appointment that we are under these hard trials, we are bound to submit to it; and though this world affords us no encouragement, our blessed Savior has abundantly supplied the want of all earthly comfort, by assuring us that "the kingdom of heaven is theirs who suffer persecution for justice's sake." Matt. v. 10.

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